

THE LIVING AGE.

SEVENTH SERIES {
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THE ETERNAL ALLEGORY.

Careless, we venture the young ways
of life,
Casting away the vestments of the
past;
Unarmored, we press out into the
strife,
Our horns of challenge echo down
the blast.

With vallant feet and questing eyes
we fare
Into the dewy dawn before the sun.
We have put by the burden of despair,
The new untried horizons we have
won

Beckon with vague allurements; and we
seek
(Our hands, unshackled, full of life's
new gifts)
Crowned freedom on her ultimate lone
peak—
Our songs go up to her: the shadow
lifts.

Then stars are darkened in the mid-
night sky;
We fall, as in the forest falls a leaf.
Over us ride the legions where we lie,
The tempests and the thunderstorms
of grief.

And shuddering down the old unhappy
slope,
The old blind pathways that our
fathers trod,
With all the burden of our fear and
hope,
Life flings us broken at the feet of
God.

Ethel Talbot.

The Academy.

THE THRUSH AND THE MAN.

Time to get up! Time to get up! says
the Thrush,
Shouting the golden hours of morn-
ing through.
Every bird is merry in bower and
bush:
Love's in flower and a thousand
things to do.

Time to get up! Time to get up! he
calls.

Slug-a-bed! slug-a-bed! mocking and
calling yet.

O thrush, be still! For day has a yoke
that galls,

A grief, a weariness: let me sleep and
forget.

You'll be late! You'll be late! says
the Thrush: too late for feast.

Winter's over: rise and be joyful
now.

The wind in the south forgets that
once it was east;

There's snow on the thorn and rose
on the apple-bough.

O thrush, be silent! Let me rest from
my cares,

From grief that irks, and age that
comes and the night.

You'll be late! says the Thrush. See
the sun!

You'll be late for prayers.

We've sung our Prime and Matins and
None's in sight.

Share it!—share it!—share it! says the
Thrush,

Changing his note to suit unhappy
me.

When love shares the burden, what is
it? Tush!

Heavy for one is light for two, for
three.

Share it!—share it! calls again and flies.

Comfort, counsel for a hapless ear.

Sure, Minerva's fowl was not so wise!

Time to get up! O thrush, I rise—I
hear!

Katharine Tynan.

ANGELS.

When life is difficult, I dream
Of how the angels dance in heaven!
Of how the angels dance and sing
In gardens of eternal spring,
Because their sins have been for-
given . . .

And never more for them shall be
The terrors of mortality!

When life is difficult, I dream

Of how the angels dance in heaven . . .

Olive Custance.

THE NOVEL IN "THE RING AND THE BOOK."

If on such an occasion as this—even with our natural impulse to shake ourselves free of reserves—some sharp choice between the dozen different aspects of one of the most copious of our poets becomes a prime necessity, though remaining at the same time a great difficulty, so in respect to the most voluminous of his works the admirer is promptly held up, as we have come to call it; finds himself almost baffled by alternatives. "The Ring and the Book" is so vast and so essentially Gothic a structure, spreading and soaring and branching at such a rate, covering such ground, putting forth such pinnacles and towers and brave excrescences, planting its transepts and chapels and porticoes, its clustered hugeness or inordinate muchness, that with any first approach we but walk vaguely and slowly, rather bewilderedly, round and round it, wondering at what point we had best attempt such entrance as will save our steps and light our uncertainty, most enable us to reach our personal chair, our indicated chapel or shrine, when once within. For it is to be granted that to this inner view the likeness of the literary monument to one of the great religious gives way a little, sustains itself less than in the first, the affronting mass; unless we simply figure ourselves, under the great roof, looking about us through a splendid thickness and dimness of air, an accumulation of spiritual presences or unprofaned mysteries, that makes our impression heavily general—general only—and leaves us helpless for reporting on particulars. The particulars for our purpose have thus their identity much rather in certain features of the twenty faces—either of

one or of another of these—that the structure turns to the outer day, and that we can, as it were, sit down before and consider at our comparative ease. I say comparative advisedly, for I cling to the dear old tradition that Browning is "difficult"—which we were all brought up on and which I think we should, especially on a rich retrospective day like this, with the atmosphere of his great career settling upon us as much as possible, feel it a shock to see break down in too many places at once. Selecting my ground, by your kind invitation, for sticking in and planting before you, to flourish so far as it shall, my little sprig of bay, I have of course tried to measure the quantity of ease with which our material may on that noted spot allow itself to be treated. There are innumerable things in "The Ring and the Book"—as the comprehensive image I began with makes it needless I should say; and I have been above all appealed to by the possibility that one of these, pursued for awhile through the labyrinth, but at last overtaken and then more or less confessing its identity, might have yielded up its best essence as a grateful theme, under some fine strong economy of *prose* treatment. So here you have me talking at once of prose and seeking that connection to help out my case.

From far back, from my first reading of these volumes, which took place at the time of their disclosure to the world, when I was a fairly young person, the sense, almost the pang, of the novel they might have constituted, sprang sharply from them; so that I was to go on through the years almost irreverently, all but quite profanely, if you will, thinking of the great loose and uncontrolled composition, the great heavy-hanging cluster of related but

* Address delivered before the Academic Committee of the Royal Society of Literature in Commemoration of the Centenary of Robert Browning, May 7, 1912.

unreconciled parts, as a fiction of the so-called historic type, that is, as a suggested study of the manners and conditions from which our own have more or less traceably issued, just tragically spoiled—or as a work of art, in other words, smothered in the producing. To which I hasten to add my consciousness of the scant degree in which such a fresh start from our author's documents, such a re-projection of them, wonderful documents as they can only have been, may claim a critical basis. Conceive me as simply astride of my different fancy, my other dream, of the matter—which bolted with me, as I have said, at the first alarm.

Browning worked, in this connection, literally *upon* documents; no page of his long story is more vivid and splendid than that of his find of the Book in the litter of a market-stall in Florence and the swoop of practised perception with which he caught up in it a treasure. Here was a subject stated to the last ounce of its weight, a living and breathing record of facts pitiful and terrible, a mass of matter bristling with revelations and yet at the same time wrapped over with layer upon layer of contemporary appreciation; which appreciation, in its turn, was a part of the wealth to be appreciated. What our great master saw was his situation founded, seated there in positively packed and congested significance, though by just so much as it was charged with meanings and values were those things undeveloped and unexpressed. They looked up at him, even at that first flush and from their market-stall, and said to him, in their compressed compass, as with the muffled rumble of a slow-coming earthquake, "Express us, express us, immortalize us as we'll immortalize *you*!"—so that the terms of the understanding were so far cogent and clear. It was an understanding,

on their side, with the poet; and, since that poet had produced "Men and Women," "Dramatic Lyrics," "Dramatis Personæ" and sundry plays—we needn't even foist on him "Sordello"—he could but understand in his own way. That way would have had to be quite some other, we fully see, had he been by habit and profession, not just the lyric, epic, dramatic commentator, the extractor, to whatever essential potency and redundancy, of the moral of the fable, but the very fabulist himself, the inventor and projector, layer down of the postulate and digger of the foundation. I doubt if we have a precedent for this energy of appropriation of a deposit of *stated* matter, a block of sense already in position and requiring not to be shaped and squared and caused any further to solidify, but rather to suffer disintegration, be pulled apart, melted down, hammered, by the most characteristic of the poet's processes, to powder—dust of gold and silver, let us say! He was to apply to it his favorite system—that of looking at his subject from the point of view of a curiosity almost sublime in its freedom, yet almost homely in its method, and of smuggling as many more points of view together into that one as the fancy might take him to smuggle, on a scale on which even he had never before applied it; this with a courage and a confidence that, in presence of all the conditions, conditions many of them arduous and arid and thankless even to defiance, we can only pronounce splendid, and of which the issue was to be of a proportioned monstrous magnificence.

The one definite forecast for this product would have been that it should figure for its producer as a poem—as if he had simply said, "I embark at any rate for the Golden Isles"; everything else was of the pure incalculable, the frank voyage of adventure. To what extent the Golden Isles were, in fact, to

be reached is a matter we needn't pretend, I think, absolutely to determine; let us feel for ourselves and as we will about it—either see our adventurer, disembarked bag and baggage and in possession, plant his flag on the highest eminence within his ring of sea, or, on the other hand, but watch him approach and beat back a little, tack and circle and stand off, always fairly in sight of land, catching rare glimpses and meeting strange alms, but not quite achieving the final *coup* that annexes the group. He returns to us under either view all scented and salted with his measure of contact; and that for the moment is enough for us—more than enough for me, at any rate, engaged, for your beguilement, in this practical relation of snuffing up what he brings. He brings, however one puts it, a detailed report, which is but another word for a story; and it is with his story, his offered, not his borrowed one—a very different matter—that I am concerned. We are probably most of us so aware of its general content that if I sum this up I may do so briefly. The Book of the Florentine rubbish-heap is the full account (as full accounts were conceived in those days) of the trial before the Roman courts, with enquiries and judgments by the Tuscan authorities intermixed, of a certain Count Guido Franceschini of Arezzo, decapitated, in company with four confederates—these latter hanged—on February 22, 1698, for the murder of his young wife Pompilia Comparini and her adopted parents, Pietro and Violante of that ilk.

The circumstances leading to this climax were primarily his marriage to Pompilia, some years before, in Rome—she being then but in her thirteenth year—under the impression, fostered in him by the elder pair, that she was their own child and on this head heirless to moneys settled on them from of old in the event of their having a child.

They had, in fact, had none, and had, in substitution, invented, so to speak, Pompilia, the luckless base-born baby of a woman of lamentable character easily induced to part with her for cash. They bring up the hapless creature as their daughter and as their daughter they marry her, in Rome, to the middle-aged and impecunious Count Guido, a rapacious and unscrupulous fortune-seeker by whose superior social position, as we say, dreadfully *décaduto* though he be, they are dazzled out of all circumspection. The girl, innocent, ignorant, bewildered and scared, is purely passive, is taken home by her husband to Arezzo, where she is at first attended by Pietro and Violante, and where the direst disappointments await the three. Count Guido proves the basest of men, and his home a place of terror and of torture, from which at the age of seventeen, and shortly prior to her giving birth to an heir to the house, such as it is, she is rescued by a pitying witness of her misery, Canon Caponsacchi, a man of the world and adorning it, yet in holy orders, as men of the world in Italy might then be, who clandestinely helps her, at peril of both of their lives, back to Rome, and of whom it is attested that he has had no other relation with her but this of distinguished and all-disinterested friend in need. The pretended parents have at an early stage thrown up their benighted game, fleeing from the rigor of their dupe's domestic rule, disclosing to him vindictively the part they have played and the consequent failure of any profit to him through his wife, and leaving him in turn to wreak his spite, which has become infernal, on the wretched Pompilia. He pursues her to Rome, on her eventual flight, and overtakes her, with her companion, just outside the gates; but having, by the aid of the local powers, re-achieved possession of her, he contents himself for the time with procur-

ing her sequestration in a convent, from which, however, she is presently allowed to emerge in view of the near birth of her child. She rejoins Pietro and Violante, devoted to her, oddly enough, through all their folly and fault; and under their roof, in a lonely Roman suburb, her child comes into the world. Her husband meanwhile, hearing of her release, gives way afresh to the fury that had not at the climax of his former pursuit taken full effect; he recruits a band of four of his young tenants or farm-laborers and makes his way, armed, like his companions, with knives, to the door behind which three of the parties to all the wrong done him, as he holds, then lurk. He pronounces, after knocking and waiting, the name of Caponsacchi; upon which, as the door opens, Violante presents herself. He stabs her to death on the spot with repeated blows—like her companions she is off her guard; and he throws himself on each of these with equal murderous effect. Pietro, crying for mercy, falls second beneath him; after which he attacks his wife, whom he literally hacks to death. She survives, by a miracle, long enough, in spite of all her wounds, to testify; which testimony, as may be imagined, is not the least precious part of the case. Justice is on the whole, though deprecated and delayed, what we call satisfactory; the last word is for the Pope in person, Innocent XII Pignatelli, at whose deliberation, lone and supreme, on Browning's page, we splendidly assist; and Count Guido and his accomplices, bloodless as to the act though these appear to have been, meet their discriminated doom.

That is the bundle of facts, accompanied with the bundle of proceedings, legal, ecclesiastical, diplomatic and other, on the facts, that our author, of a summer's day, made prize of; but our general temptation, as I say—out of which springs this question of the other

values of character and effect, the other completeness of picture and drama, that the confused whole might have had for us—is a distinctly different thing. The difference consists, you see, to begin with, in the very breath of our poet's genius, already, and so inordinately, at play on them from the first of our knowing them. And it consists in the second place of such an extracted sense of the whole, which becomes, after the most extraordinary fashion, bigger by the extraction; immeasurably bigger than even the most cumulative weight of the mere crude evidence, that our choice of how to take it all is in a manner determined for us; we can only take it as tremendously interesting, interesting not only in itself, but with the great added interest, the dignity and authority and beauty, of Browning's general perception of it. We can't not accept this, and little enough, on the whole, do we want not to; it sees us, with its tremendous push, that of its poetic, æsthetic, historic, psychological shoulder (one scarce knows how to name it), so far on our way. Yet all the while we are in presence, not at all of an achieved form, but of a mere preparation for one, though on the hugest scale; so that, you see, we are no more than decently attentive with our question: "Which of them all, of the various methods of casting the wondrously mixed metal, is he, as he goes, preparing?" Well, as he keeps giving and giving, in immeasurable plenty, it is in our selection from it all and our picking it over that we seek, and to whatever various and unequal effect find, our account. He works over his vast material and we then work *him* over, though not availing ourselves, to this end, of a grain he himself doesn't somehow give us; and there we are.

I admit that my faith in my particular contention would be a degree firmer and fonder if there didn't glimmer through our poet's splendid hocus-

pocus just the hint of one of those flaws that sometimes deform the fair face of a subject otherwise generally appealing or promising—of such a subject in especial as may have been submitted to us, possibly even with the pretension to impose it, in too complete a shape. The idea but half hinted—when it is a very good one—is apt to contain the germ of happier fruit than the freight of the whole branch, waved at us or dropped into our lap, very often proves. This happens when we take over, as the phrase is, established data, take them over from existing records and under some involved obligation to take them as they stand. That drawback rests heavily, for instance, on the so-called historic fiction—so beautiful a case it is of a muddlement of terms—and is just one of the beautiful reasons why the embarrassed Muse of that form, pulled up again and again, and the more often the fine intelligence invokes her, by the need of a superior harmony which shall be after all but a superior truth, catches up her flurried skirts and makes her saving dash for some gap in the hedge of romance. Now the flaw on this so intensely expressive face, that of the general *donnée* of the fate of Pompilia, is that, amid the variety of forces at play about her, the unity of the situation isn't, by one of those large, straight, ideal gestures on the part of the Muse, handed to us at a stroke. The question of the whereabouts of the unity of a group of data subject to be wrought together into a thing of art, the question in other words of the point at which the various implications of interest, no matter how many, *most* converge, and interfuse, becomes always, by my sense of the affair, quite the first to be answered; for according to the answer shapes and fills itself the very vessel of that beauty—the beauty, exactly, of interest, of maximum interest, which is the ultimate extract of

any collocation of facts, any picture of life, and the finest aspect of any artistic work. Call a novel a picture of life as much as we will; call it, according to one of our recent fashions, a slice, or even a chunk, even a "bloody" chunk of life, a rough excision from that substance as superficially cut and as summarily served as possible, it still fails to escape this exposure to appreciation, or in other words to criticism, that it has had to be selected, selected under some sense for something; and the unity of the exhibition should meet us, does meet us if the work be done, at the point at which that sense is most patent. If the slice or the chunk, or whatever we call it, if it isn't "done," as we say—and as it so often declines to be—the work itself of course isn't likely to be; and there we may dismiss it.

The first thing we do is to cast about for some centre in our field; seeing that, for such a purpose as ours, the subject might very nearly go a-begging with none more definite than the author has provided for it. I find that centre in the embracing consciousness of Caponsacchi, which, coming to the rescue of our question of treatment, of our search for a point of control, practically saves everything, and shows itself, moreover, the only thing that *can* save. The more we ask of any other part of our picture that it shall exercise a comprehensive function, the more we see that particular part inadequate; as inadequate even in the extraordinarily magnified range of spirit and reach of intelligence of the atrocious Franceschini as in the sublime passivity and plasticity of the childish Pompilia, educated to the last point though she be indeed by suffering, but otherwise so untaught that she can neither read nor write. The magnified state is in this work still more than elsewhere the note of the intelligence, of any and every faculty of thought, imputed by our poet

to his creatures; and it takes a great mind, one of the greatest, we may at once say, to make these persons express and confess themselves to such an effect of intellectual splendor. He resorts primarily to *their* sense, their sense of themselves and of everything else they know, to exhibit them, and has for this purpose to keep them, and to keep them persistently and inexhaustibly, under the fixed lens of his prodigious vision. He thus makes out in them boundless treasures of truth—truth even when it happens to be, as in the case of Count Guido, but a shining wealth of constitutional falsity. Of the extent to which he may after this fashion unlimitedly draw upon them, his exposure of Count Guido, which goes on and on, though partly, I admit, by repeating itself, is a wondrous example. It is not too much to say of Pompilia — Pompilia pierced with twenty wounds, Pompilia on her death-bed, Pompilia but seventeen years old and but a fortnight a mother—that she *acquires* an intellectual splendor just by the fact of the vast covering charity of imagination with which her recording, our commemorated, avenger, never so as in this case an avenger of the wronged beautiful things of life, hangs over and breathes upon her. We see her come out to him; and the extremely remarkable thing is that we see it, on the whole, without doubting that it might just have been. Nothing could thus be more interesting, however it may at moments and in places puzzle us, than the impunity, on our poet's part, of most of these overstretchings of proportion, these violations of the immediate appearance. Browning is deep down below the immediate with the first step of his approach; he has vaulted over the gate, is already far afield, and never, so long as we watch him, has occasion to fall back. We wonder, for, after all, the real is his quest, the very ideal of the real, the

real most finely mixed with life, which *is*, in the last analysis, the ideal; and we know, with our dimmer vision, no such reality as a Franceschini fighting for his life, fighting for the vindication of his baseness, embodying his squalor, with an audacity of wit, an intensity of color, a variety of speculation and illustration, that represent well-nigh the maximum play of the human mind. It is in like sort scarce too much to say of the exquisite Pompilia that on her part intelligence and expression are disengaged to a point at which the angels may well begin to envy her; and all again without our once wincing so far as our consistently liking to see and hear and believe is concerned. Caponsacchi regales us, of course, with the rarest fruit and a great character, a great culture and a great case; but Caponsacchi is acceptedly and naturally, needfully and illustratively, splendid. He *is* the soul of man at its finest—having passed through the smoky fires of life and emerging clear and high. Greatest of all the spirits exhibited, however, is that of the more than octogenarian Pope, at whose brooding, pondering, solitary vigil, by the end of a hard gray winter day in the great bleak waiting Vatican—"in the plain closet where he does such work"—we assist as intimately as at every other step of the case, and on whose grand meditation we heavily hang. But the Pope strikes us at first—though indeed perhaps only at first—as too high above the whole connection functionally and historically for us to place him within it dramatically. Our novel faces provisionally the question of dispensing with him, as it dispenses with the amazing, bristling, all too indulgently presented Roman advocates on either side of the case who combine to put together the most formidable monument we possess to Browning's active curiosity, and the liveliest proof of his almost unlimited power to give on his

readers' nerves without giving on his own.

What remains with us all this time, none the less, is the effect of magnification, the exposure of each of these figures, in its degree, to that iridescent wash of personality, of temper and faculty, that our author ladles out to them, as the copious share of each, from his own great reservoir of spiritual health, and which makes us, as I have noted, seek the reason of a perpetual anomaly. Why, bristling so with references to *him* rather than with references to each other or to any accompanying set of circumstances, do they still establish more truth and beauty than they sacrifice, do they still, according to their chance, help to make "The Ring and the Book" a great living thing, a great objective mass? I brushed by the answer a moment ago, I think, in speaking of the development in Pompilia of the resource of expression, which brings us round, it seems to me, to the justification of Browning's method. To express his inner self—his outward was a different affair! and to express it utterly, even if no matter how, was clearly, for his own measure and consciousness of that inner self, to be poetic; and the solution of all the deviations and disparities or, speaking critically, monstrosities, in the mingled tissue of this work, is the fact that whether or no by such convulsions of soul and sense life got delivered for him, the garment of life—which for him was poetry and poetry alone—got disposed in its due and adequate multitudinous folds. We move with him but in images and references and vast and far correspondences; we eat but of strange compounds and drink but of rare distillations; and very soon, after a course of this, we feel ourselves, however much or however little to our advantage we may on occasion pronounce it, in the world of Expression at any cost. That, essentially, is the world

of poetry—which, in the cases known to our experience where it seems to us to differ from Browning's world, does so but through this latter's having been, by the vigor and violence, the bold familiarity, of his grasp and pull at it, moved several degrees nearer us, so to speak, than any other of the same general sort with which we are acquainted; so that, intellectually, we back away from it a little, back down before it, again and again, as we try to get off from a picture or a group or a view which is too much *upon* us and thereby out of focus. Browning is "upon" us, straighter upon us always, somehow, than anyone else of his race; and we thus recoll, we push our chair back, from the table he so tremendously spreads, just to see a little better what is on it. That makes a relation with him that it is difficult to express; as if he came up against us, each time, on the same side of the street and not on the other side, across the way, where we mostly see the poets elegantly walk, and where we greet them without danger of concussion. It is on this same side, as I call it, on *our* side, on the other hand, that I rather see our encounter with the novelists taking place; we being, as it were, more mixed with them, or they at least, by their desire and necessity, more mixed with us, and our brush of them, in their minor frenzy, a comparatively muffled encounter.

We have in the whole thing, at any rate, the element of action which is at the same time constant picture, and the element of picture which is at the same time constant action; and with a fusion, as the mass moves, that is none the less effective, none the less thick and complete, from our not owing it in the least to an artful economy. Another force pushes its way through the waste and rules the scene, making wrong things right and right things a hundred times more so—that breath of

Browning's own particular matchless Italy which takes us full in the face and remains from the first the felt, rich, colored air in which we live. The quantity of that atmosphere that he had to give out is like nothing else in English poetry, any more than in English prose, that I recall; and since I am taking these liberties with him, let me take one too, a little, with the fruit of another genius shining at us here in association—with that great placed and timed prose fiction which we owe to George Eliot, and in which *her* projection of the stage and scenery is so different a matter. Curious enough this difference where so many things make for identity—the quantity of talent, the quantity of knowledge, the high equality (or almost) of culture and curiosity, not to say of "spiritual life." Each writer drags along a far-sweeping train, though indeed Browning's spreads so considerably furthest; but his stirs up, to my vision, a perfect cloud of gold-dust, while hers, in "*Romola*," by contrast, leaves the air about as clear, about as white, and withal about as cold, as before she had benevolently entered it. This straight saturation of our author's, this prime assimilation of the elements for which the name of Italy stands, is a single splendid case, however; I can think of no second one that is not below it—if we take it as supremely expressed in those of his lyrics and shorter dramatic monologues that it has most helped to inspire. The Rome and Tuscany of the early 'fifties had become for him so at once a medium, a bath of the senses and perceptions, into which he could sink, in which he could unlimitedly soak, that wherever he might be touched afterwards he gave out some effect of that immersion. This places him to my mind quite apart, makes the rest of our poetic record of a similar experience comparatively pale and abstract. Shelley and Swinburne—to

name only his compeers—are, I know, a part of the record; but the author of "*Men and Women*," of "*Pippa Passes*," of certain of the Dramatic Lyrics and other scattered felicities, not only expresses and reflects the matter; he fairly, he heatedly, if I may use such a term, exudes and perspires it. Shelley, let us say in the connection, is a light, and Swinburne, let us say, a sound; Browning alone of them all is a temperature. We feel it, we are in it at a plunge, with the very first pages of the thing before us; to which, I confess, we surrender with a momentum drawn from fifty of their predecessors, pages not less sovereign, elsewhere.

The old Florence of the late spring closes round us; the hand of Italy is at once, with the recital of the old-world litter of Piazza San Lorenzo, with that of the great glare and the great shadow-masses, heavy upon us, heavy with that strange weight, that mixed pressure, which is somehow, to the imagination, at once a caress and a menace. Our poet kicks up on the spot and at short notice what I have called his cloud of gold-dust. I can but speak for myself at least—something that I want to feel both as historic and æsthetic truth, both as pictorial and moral interest, something that will repay my fancy tenfold if I can but feel it, hovers before me, and I say to myself that, whether or no a great poem is to come off, I will be hanged if one of the vividest of all stories and one of the sharpest of all impressions doesn't. I beckon these things on, I follow them up, I so desire and need them that I of course, by my imaginative collaboration, contribute to them—from the moment, that is, of my finding myself really in relation to the great points. On the other hand, as certainly, it has taken the author of the first volume, and of the two admirable chapters of the same—since I can't call them cantos—entitled respectively "*Half-Rome*"

and "The Other Half-Rome," to put me in relation; where it is that he keeps me more and more, letting the closeness of my state, it must be owned, occasionally drop, letting the finer call on me, even, for bad quarters-of-an-hour, considerably languish, but starting up before me again in vivid authority if I really presume to droop or stray. He takes his wilful way with me, but I make it my own, picking over and over as I have said, like some lingering talking pedlar's client, his great unloosed pack; and thus it is that by the time I am settled with Pompilia at Arezzo I have lived into all the conditions. They press upon me close, those wonderful, dreadful, beautiful particulars of the Italy of the eve of the eighteenth century—Browning himself moving about, darting hither and thither in them, at his mighty ease—beautiful, I say because of the quantity of romantic and æsthetic tradition, from a more romantic and æsthetic age, still visibly, palpably, in solution there; and wonderful and dreadful through something of a similar tissue of matchless and ruthless consistencies and immoralities. I make to my hand, as this infatuated reader, *my* Italy of the eve of the eighteenth century—a vast painted and gilded rococo shell roofing over a scenic, an amazingly figured and furnished earth, but shutting out almost the whole of our own dearly-bought, rudely-recovered spiritual sky. You see I have this right, all the while, if I recognize my suggested material, which keeps coming and coming in the measure of my need, and my duty to which is to recognize it, and as handsomely and actively as possible. The great thing is that I have such a group of figures moving across a so constituted scene—figures so typical, so salient, so reeking with the old-world character, so impressed all over with its manners and its morals, and so predestined, we see, to this particular horrid little

drama. And let me not be charged with giving it away, the idea of the latent prose fiction, by calling it little and horrid; let me not—for with my contention I can't possibly afford to—appear to agree with those who speak of the Franceschini-Comparini case as a mere vulgar criminal anecdote.

It might have been such but for two reasons—counting only the principal ones; one of these, our fact that we see it so, I repeat, in Browning's inordinately-colored light, and the other—which is indeed, perhaps, but another face of the same—that, with whatever limitations, it gives us in the rarest manner three characters of the first importance. I hold three a great many; I could have done with it almost, I think, if there had been but one or two; our rich provision shows you, at any rate, what I mean by speaking of our author's performance as, above all, a preparation for something. Deeply he felt that with the three—the three built up at us each with an equal genial rage of reiterative touches—there couldn't eventually not be something done (artistically done, I mean) if someone would only do it! There they are in their old yellow Arezzo, that miniature, milder Florence, as sleepy to my recollection as a little English cathedral city clustered about a Close, but dreaming not so peacefully nor so innocently; there is the great fretted fabric of the Church on which they are all swarming and grovelling, yet after their fashion interesting parasites, from the high and dry old Archbishop, meanly wise or ignobly edifying, to whom Pompilia resorts in her woe and who practically pushes her away with a shuffling velvet foot; down through the couple of Franceschini cadets, Canon Girolamo and Abate Paul, mere minions, fairly in the verminous degree, of the overgrown order or too-rank organism; down to Count Guido himself and to Canon Caponsacchi, who

have taken the tonsure at the outset of their careers, but none too strictly the vows, and who lead their lives under some strangest, profanest, perverted-est clerical category. There have been before this the Roman preliminaries, the career of the queer Comparini, the adoption, the assumption of the parentship, of the ill-starred little girl, with the sordid cynicism of her marriage out of hand, conveying her presumptive little fortune, her poor handful of even less than contingent cash, to hungry middle-aged Count Guido's stale "rank"; the many-toned note or turbid harmony of all of which recurs to us in the vivid image of the pieties and paganisms of San Lorenzo in Lucina, that banal little church in the old upper Corso—banal, that is, at the worst, with the rare Roman *banalité*; bravely banal, or banal with style—that we have all passed with a sense of its reprieve to our sight-seeing, and where the bleeding bodies of the still-breathing Pompilia and her extinct companions are laid out on the greasy marble of the altar-steps. To glance at these things, however, is fairly to be tangled, and at once, in the author's complexity of suggestion, to which our own thickcoming fancies respond in no less a measure; so that I have already missed my time to so much even as name properly the tremendous little chapter we should have devoted to the Franceschini interior as revealed at last to Comparini eyes; the sinister scene, or ragged ruin, of the Aretine "palace," where pride and penury and, at once, rabid resentment, show their teeth in the dark and the void, and where Pompilia's inspired little character, clear silver hardened, effectually beaten and battered, to steel, begins to shine at the blackness with a light that fairly outfaces at last the gleam of wolfish fangs—the character that draws from Guido, in his, alas, too boundless harangue of the fourth volume, some

of the sharpest specifications into which that extraordinary desert, that indescribable waste of intellectual life, as I have hinted at its being, from time to time flowers.

None of your abnegation of revenge!
Fly at me frank, tug where I tear again!
Away with the empty stare! Be holy still,
And stupid ever! Occupy your patch
Of private snow that's somewhere in what world
May now be growing icy round your head,
And anguish at your foot-print—freeze not me!

I have spoken of the enveloping consciousness—or call it just the struggling, emerging, comparing, at last intensely living conscience—of Caponsacchi as the indicated centre of our situation or determinant of our form, in the matter of the excellent novel; and know, of course, what such an indication lets me in for, responsibly speaking, in the way of a rearrangement of relations, in the way of liberties taken. To lift our subject out of the sphere of anecdote and place it in the sphere of drama, libelally considered, to give it dignity by extracting its finest importance, causing its parts to flower together into some splendid special sense, we supply it with a large lucid reflector, which we find only, as I have already noted, in that mind and soul concerned in the business that have at once the highest sensibility and the highest capacity, or that are, as we may call it, most admirably agitated. There is the awkward fact, the objector may say, that by our record the mind and soul in question are not concerned till a given hour, when many things have already happened and the climax is almost in sight; to which we reply, at our ease, that we simply don't suffer that fact to be awkward. From the moment I am taking liberties I suffer no

awkwardness; I should be very helpless, quite without resource and without vision, if I did. I said it to begin with: Browning works the whole thing over—the whole thing as originally given him—and we work *him*; helpfully, artfully, boldly, which is our whole blest basis. We therefore turn Caponsacchi on earlier, ever so much earlier; turn him on, with a brave ingenuity, from the very first—that is in Rome, if need be; place him there in the field, at once recipient and agent, vaguely conscious and with splendid brooding apprehension, awaiting the adventure of his life, awaiting his call, his real call (the others have been such vain shows and hollow stopgaps), awaiting, in fine, his terrible great fortune. His direct connection with Pompilia begins, certainly, at Arezzo, only after she has been some time hideously mis-mated and has suffered all but her direst extremity—that is of the essence; we *take* it; it's all right. But his indirect participation is another affair, and we get it—at a magnificent stroke—by the fact that his view of Franceschini, his fellow-Aretine sordidly "on the make," his measure of undesired, of, indeed, quite execrated contact with him, brushed against in the motley, hungry Roman traffic, where and while that sinister soul snuffs about on the very vague, or the very foul, scent of *his* fortune, may begin whenever we like. We have only to have it begin right, only to make it, on the part of two men, a relation of strong, irritated perception and restless, righteous, convinced instinct in the one nature, and of equally instinctive hate and envy, jealousy and latent fear, on the other, to see the indirect connection, the one with Pompilia, as I say, throw across our page as portentous a shadow as we need. Then we get Caponsacchi as a recipient up to the brim—as an agent, a predestined one, up to the hilt. I can scarce begin to tell you what I see

him give, as we say, or how his sentient and observational life, his fine reactions in presence of such a creature as Guido, such a social type and image and lurid light, as it were, make him comparatively a modern man, breathed upon, to that deep and interesting agitation I have mentioned, by more forces than he yet reckons or knows the names of.

The direct relation—always to Pompilia—is made, at Arezzo, as we know, by Franceschini himself; preparing his own doom, in the false light of his debased wit, by creating an appearance of hidden dealing between his wife and the priest which shall, as promptly as he likes—if he but work it right—compromise and overwhelm them. The particular deepest damnation he conceives for his weaker, his weakest victim is that she shall take the cleric Caponsacchi for her lover, he indubitably willing—to Guido's apprehension; and that her castigation at his hands for this, sufficiently proved upon her, shall be the last luxury of his own baseness. He forges infernally, though grossly enough, an imputed correspondence between them, a series of love-letters, scandalous scrawls, of the last erotic intensity; which we in the event see solemnly weighed by his fatuous judges, all fatuous save the grave old Pope, in the scale of Pompilia's guilt and responsibility. It is this atrocity that at the *dénouement* damns Guido himself most, or well-nigh; but if it fails and recoils, as all his calculations do—it is only his rush of passion that doesn't miss—that is by the fact exactly that, as we have seen, his wife and her friend are, for our perfect persuasion, characters of the deepest dye. There, if you please, is the finest side of our subject; such sides come up, such sides flare out upon us, when we get such characters in such embroilments. Admire with me therefore our felicity in this first-class value of Browning's

beautiful, critical, genial vision of his Caponsacchi—vision of him as the tried and tempered and illumined *man*, a great round smooth, though as yet but little worn gold-piece, an embossed and figured ducat or sequin of the period, placed by the poet in my hand. He gives me that value to spend for him, spend on all the strange old experience, old sights and sounds and stuffs, of the old stored Italy—so we have at least the wit to spend it to high advantage; which is just what I mean by our taking the liberties we spoke of. I see such bits we can get with it; but the difficulty is that I see so many more things than I can have even dreamed of giving you a hint of. I see the Arezzo life and the Arezzo crisis with every "I" dotted and every circumstance presented; and when Guido takes his wife, as a possible trap for her, to the theatre—the theatre of old Arezzo; share with me the tattered vision and inhale the musty air!—I am well in range of Pompilla, the tragically exquisite, in her box, with her husband not there for the hour but posted elsewhere; I look at her in fact over Caponsacchi's shoulder and that of his brother-canon Conti, while this light character, a vivid recruit to our company, manages to toss into her lap, and as coming in guise of overture from his smitten friend, "a paper-twist of comfits." There is a particular famous occasion at the theatre in a work of more or less contemporary fiction—at a petty provincial theatre which isn't even, as you might think, the place where Pendennis had his first glimpse of Miss Fotheringay. The evening at the Rouen playhouse of Flaubert's "Madame Bovary" has a relief not elsewhere equalled—it is the most *done* visit to the play in all literature—but, though "doing" is now so woefully out of favor, my idea would be to give it here a precious *pendant*; which connection, silly Canon Conti,

the old fripperies and levities, the whole queer picture and show of manners, is handed over to us, expressly, as *inapt* for poetic illustration.

What is equally apt for poetic or for the other, indeed, is the thing for which we feel "The Ring and the Book" preponderantly done—it is at least what comes out clearest, comes out as straightest and strongest and finest, from Browning's genius—the exhibition of the great constringent relation between man and woman at once at its maximum and as the relation most worth while in life for either party; an exhibition forming quite the main substance of our author's message. He has dealt, in his immense variety and vivacity, with other relations, but on this he has thrown his most living weight; it remains the thing of which his own rich experience most convincingly spoke to him. He has testified to it as charged to the brim with the burden of the senses, and has testified to it as almost too clarified, too liberated and sublimated, for traceable application or fair record; he has figured it as never too much either of the flesh or of the spirit for him, so long as the possibility of both of these is in each, but always and ever as the thing absolutely most worth while. It is in the highest and rarest degree clarified and disengaged for Caponsacchi and Pompilla; but what their history most concludes to is how ineffably it was, whatever happened, worth while. Worth while most then for them or for us is the question? Well, let us say worth while assuredly for us, in this noble exercise of our imagination. Which accordingly shows us what we, for all our prose basis, would have found, to repeat my term once more, prepared for us. There isn't a detail of their panting flight to Rome over the autumn Apennines—the long hours when they melt together only *not* to meet—that doesn't positively plead for our perfect

prose transcript. And if it be said that the mere massacre at the final end is a lapse to passivity from the high plane, for our pair of protagonists, of constructive, of heroic vision, this is not a blur from the time everything that happens happens most effectively to Caponsacchi's life. Pompilla's is taken, but she is none the less given; and it is in his consciousness and experience that she most intensely flowers—with all her jubilation for doing so. So that *he* contains the whole—unless indeed, after all, the Pope does, the Pope whom I was leaving out as too transcendent for *our* version. Unless, unless, further and further, I see what I have at this late moment no right to; see, as the very end and splendid climax of all, Caponsacchi sent for to the Vatican and admitted alone to the Papal presence. *There* is a scene if we will; and in the mere mutual confrontation, brief, silent, searching, recognizing, consecrating, almost as august on the one part as on the other. It rounds us off; but you will think I

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stray too far. I have wanted, alas, to say such still other fond fine things—it being of our poet's great nature to prompt them at every step—that I almost feel I have missed half my points; which will doubtless, therefore, show you these remarks in their nakedness. Take them, and my particular contention, as a pretext and a minor affair, if you will only feel them at the same time as, at the worst, a restless refinement of homage. It has been easy, in many another case, to run to earth the stray prime fancy, the original anecdote or artless tale, from which a great imaginative work, starting off after meeting it, has sprung and rebounded again and soared; and perhaps it is right and happy and final that one should have faltered in attempting, by a converse curiosity, to clip off or tie back the wings that once have spread. You will agree with me none the less, I feel, that Browning's great generous wings are over us still and even now, more than ever now; and also that they shake down on us his blessing.

Henry James.

IN DEFENCE OF THE BROWN RAT.

If there is one class of creature that is more generally held in abhorrence than any other it is undoubtedly rats and mice. I believe most people would far rather pick up a snake than touch a rat, and hardly anybody has a good word to say for them, though many can tell you of their evil deeds. In town and country alike does the common rat's ill-fame resound; the farmer speaks of it as a thief in his granary, as a slayer of chickens and young ducklings, a stealer of eggs, and of anything else it can get; the townsman murmurs about the damage done in warehouses, of the way it infests sewers, and so on. Yet despite the general feeling that rats—for we have

two species in this country, of which more presently—are unnecessary and could well be spared, despite the constant persecution the common brown rat undergoes, it is probable, nay, certain, that taking one part of the country with another the rat population varies but little from one year's end to the other, for whatever the number destroyed may be, the rate of increase is so large as easily to compensate for it.

There are but two people who rejoice in the number of rats that abound everywhere, the one is the scientist, who, speaking of the common rat, also known as the Norwegian, gray or brown rat, and scientifically as *Mus decumanus*, says, "We are not yet sure

that the Norwegian gray rat is not a blessing in disguise;"¹ the other is the schoolboy, who looks upon a rat as a heaven-sent animal, and upon a rat-hunt as the finest sport in the world. The lad's enthusiasm is easy to understand; first he has the pleasure of finding the hole, then he has to procure dogs and a ferret, next comes the breathless excitement of waiting, while the ferret advances step by step into the narrow, dark tunnel, for the squeak and rush that intimate that the rat is at home. Squeak, bump, tumble, come the sounds, shifting up and down the hedge bank as the rat retreats before its fierce adversary; the terriers guarding the different exits, stand tense and alert, or whine from sheer excitement, but if there is one hole unwatched the quarry will bolt, and amid yells, thumping of sticks, yapping of dogs, and cries of "Here he goes!" race off down the hedgerow; the fence with all its thick undergrowth of grass and nettles will not save it, and a moment later it is nothing but a morsel of brown fur being shaken and torn to pieces between the two terriers. In the meantime the ferret has come out of the hole, and is trying to find out which way its prey has gone. Then is seen the evidence that the conflict underground was a fierce one, for the courageous little animal has a bite through its jaw that it will bear the mark of for the rest of its days, indeed many a good ferret succumbs to wounds of this nature through blood-poisoning setting in.

But why does the scientific man say that perhaps rats are a blessing after all? The answer is long, and rather complicated, though the whole subject is exceedingly interesting, and even if "rats and the plague" have been rather dinned into people's ears of late, some facts concerning both may not come amiss. The first point is that rats like pheasants, are not natives of this is-

land, but history is discreetly silent as to when they arrived; being notoriously good sailors, doubtlessly they came over "the sea in ships," and having once invaded the land were not easily got rid of again. The rat of which I am now writing is not our present common, too common, brown rat, though in its day it was plentiful enough, but was the one known as the old English black rat (*Mus rattus*). It was in appearance a charming little creature, much smaller than our present rat, with dark fur, either slaty-black or less frequently a brownish-gray, long tail, large ears, and big prominent eyes. Grace and elegance were its characteristics, and in its habits it was somewhat more fastidious than the brown rat. It haunted houses, tunnelling passages through their walls and under the floors—which was not such a very difficult matter when the buildings were mainly wooden—and avoided, more or less, the basements, where our other rat likes to lurk. This was at the time when "plague" was seldom absent from England, when the dreaded disease would occasionally gather force and sweep across the country, so that after its passing the population would be reduced to a half, or even a quarter, of what it had formerly numbered. What the disease meant in those days we of the present time can have no conception, nor indeed can we realize the influence it yet has on the country; but for the plague there would have been no hedges, for the land was unenclosed until men were so scarce that none could be spared to guard the flocks. Then fences were erected, and our peculiarly English landscape was the result. One of the mysteries of the period was how the awful malady spread so fast. Some said it was in the air, but then why did people on one side of the street escape, while those in the houses on the opposite side all caught it; why again

¹ Sir Ray Lankester in *From an Easy Chair*.

should some households escape altogether, though the disease was in the buildings on either side? Many and strange were the theories propounded, but perhaps the last, and it is believed the true one, would seem the strangest of all to the ears of our ancestors.

It has long been known that rats are just as liable to contract plague as the human being, and that the disease is equally fatal to them, but it is only within the last few years the two facts have been connected. It is now asserted that a flea is the carrier of the infection from rats to man, for the former have several fleas that they frequently harbor. One, which is large, is common on the rats of Northern Europe, but is believed never to visit mankind. Those of warm regions have one that is a more active traveller, and passes frequently from the rats to man, or else to other animals. Both these and the cat-and-dog flea can take blood laden with plague bacilli into their intestines without any harm to themselves, though when their host dies, and leaving the cold body they find some other creature to live upon, their bite can infect it with the deadly malady. The suggestion now is that the big northern rat flea was really introduced with the brown rat, and that when the black rat was the common one in England, when there was hardly a house without other tenants than the human ones, plague epidemics were frequent among the former, the creatures retired, as is the manner of their tribe, into their holes to die, and the fleas wandering away from the cold bodies would visit any living thing they met, even if they had no intention of remaining, but a bite or two would introduce the deadly disease into the blood of the new host, and soon the human tenants of the house would be infected like the rats.

At last the brown rats came: they came from the east, conquering and
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overcoming, killing and driving away the elegant black rats that they met by the way. These eastern invaders, like others before them, swept across Europe, and some two hundred years ago they arrived in England. Large, brown, coarse-haired, small-eared, powerful creatures, the old rats had no chance against them, and whenever the two met the victory lay with the newcomers. Common, vulgar-looking animals though they were, the aristocratic black ones were no match for them, and there was not room for two species, so one or the other had to go, and the matter was never in doubt as to which it would be. Soon the newcomers were the common rats of the country, soon the old English ones were rare, but about the same time the plague began to disappear as well, indeed one may say that it practically left Great Britain about the time the brown rats arrived, which, if only a coincidence, is at least a very curious one, especially when we remember that the big rat flea of the brown rats does not as a rule visit human beings and does not therefore carry plague to them.

So there is something to be said for the much-hated common brown rat after all, and whether it would be a wise thing to totally exterminate it is a very doubtful question. And there is another thing to be said for this much disliked creature, and that is that people would not fear it so much if they had a closer acquaintance with it. One of the most charming pets I have ever had—and I have had a good many—was a large male rat. As I can imagine my readers exclaiming at such a thing, I think I had better give the history of "Whiskers," for so he was called. In April, 1910, a nestful of very young rats was found by a workman in a heap of potatoes. He knew that fresh food was always wanted for a pair of tame brown owls, so he picked up the tiny, blind, wriggling creatures,

and put them in an empty flower-pot that happened to be lying near, and when he had finished his job brought them to the house. However, I was not in, so he took them to the stable, and thinking to keep them warm until they were wanted, placed a flower-pot on the side of the harness-room grate, wherein a good fire was burning. It has always been a mystery to me why they were not cooked, but when I found them they seemed quite well and lively. The owls wanted food badly, but it seemed rather a shame to give them such funny little baby creatures. However, knowing I should get scant thanks for trying to save the lives of young rats, I was taking them to their fate, when a mad idea occurred to me. I remembered that our cat had kittens, and would she foster one of the little rats was the question? Having disposed of eight of the tiny things, I hurried back to the house with the ninth in my pocket. It was very small, blind, and feeble, and had but little hair as yet. Anything more unlike a kitten could not possibly be imagined.

I found the cat and her family—now reduced to one in consequence of orders given the previous day—in her box in one of the kitchen cupboards. The remaining kitten was a fat creature about ten days old, and its eyes were just open. I felt very doubtful of the success of my experiment as I gazed at the mother and child, but distracting the cat's attention by scratching her head and talking to her, I gently slipped the baby rat into her fur. For ten minutes or more I sat beside the cupboard on the cold flags of the kitchen floor to see she did not eat it.

Next morning when I went into the kitchen I found the cat had gone out for a walk, but that the kitten and rat were lying asleep together in the box. At breakfast time she was back, and when I looked into the cupboard there

were the rat and the kitten taking their food side by side. Then the cat raised herself and began to wash the kitten, next she licked the rat all over, after which she lay down and purred the contented song of a cat at peace with all the world. It did not seem likely she would harm the little creature after that, but I watched the family carefully for some days for fear of accidents. Nothing occurred, however, and the two flourished exceedingly. Soon both rat and kitten grew big and active enough to climb out of the box and run about the kitchen floor, and fearing that either strange cats or else the dogs would harm the little rat, I moved the family to an empty room upstairs, that they could have to themselves, and where no harm could befall them.

"Whiskers" never knew what fear meant, and it was extraordinary how tame he became. As soon as he could crawl about he would try to come to me, and when he had a good-sized room to romp in he would come racing across it, spring on my skirt and haul himself up hand over hand, thence to my shoulder, where he would sit while I carried him about. No one, however they disliked the whole race of rats, could say that this young one was without charm, and I became devoted to him. It was a most amusing sight to watch him playing with the kitten, and they had the wildest games together, romping all over the place, playing a sort of hide-and-seek round the room, and then rolling together on the floor, but one day the fun turned to anger, and blood was shed, though which was to blame, and which bit the other I never knew, for I could not find any mark on either. However, there was blood on the floor, so the kitten was sent away to a new home, but I have never heard whether it became of any use as a rat-catcher. After that the old cat devoted all her energies to the care of "Whiskers," but he did not al-

together like her constant attention. From the time he could balance himself on his hind legs, he had been most particular over his toilet, washing his face and body at frequent intervals, but the old cat did not trust him or consider he did it properly, so she would hold him down with her paws, regardless of his protesting squeaks, and lick him all over. He evidently hated the operation, and no sooner had she finished than he would do it all over again. She also went poaching and mouse-hunting on his behalf, and the minute I heard a cat mewling about the house, I knew it was "old puss" crying for somebody to come and open the door, so that she could take her spoils into the rat's room. Whether "Whiskers" would have touched the dead mice and young rabbits that his mother laid at his feet I cannot say, for as soon as she dropped them I always took them away; but on one occasion he did drag the body of a mouse off behind the sleeping-box, and as rats in a wild state like flesh, and eat all carrion greedily—even catching and killing frogs and toads when they come down to the water for breeding purposes in the spring time—I dare say he would have tried what mouse meat was like if it had not been taken away from him. He grew fast on the diet of bread and milk, corn, nuts, cake, and so on, and the bigger he got the bolder he became, but he always looked upon me as representing home and safety, and if alarmed would bolt for my pocket. His manners were perfect, and the only time he ever bit anybody was when a heavy window was dropped on his tail which was nearly cut off. On that occasion he nipped my brother's finger, but there was every excuse for him.

As "Whiskers" became full grown and the cat had other cares to take up her time and attention, she ceased to trouble about him, though she never forgot him, and sometimes paid him a

visit, but though previously she had been a good rat-hunter she has not caught one since she adopted "Whiskers."

I now had a good opportunity of studying the general opinion as to rats, and my rat in particular, but it could nearly always be summed up in the words of the old laborer who originally got me the rat family:

"They be horrible brutes, miss, an' I canna think how you can touch 'em! Look at 'im"—the rat was peeping out of the sleeve of my coat—"It gives me the shivers to see 'im! I'd like to molly-grudge 'im!"

"Molly-grudge," I had better explain, is a local word meaning to kill or completely wipe out of existence. I have also seen men who would have faced a runaway horse without a qualm go hot and cold when "Whiskers" ran across a table towards them, though assured he was perfectly harmless; indeed, but three strangers were ever induced to touch him, so strong was the repulsion felt for the creature, and only one of the three seemed to really like the rat.

Evening was the time when "Whiskers" was the most lively, and then he was allowed to run about the room where the family were reading. He was never quiet, but always racing about. First he would climb on to the curtain pole, next he would slide down again, then he would scamper about the floor, then climb on to some one's knee, perhaps jumping from it to the table where food was put ready for him, together with a glass of water, for he was a thirsty creature. It was a funny sight to see him drinking, with his little pink hands on the edge of the glass, and his tongue going up and down so fast one could hardly see it, for he lapped after the manner of a dog. Next he would pick up a walnut in his paws, and sitting up on his hind legs proceed to eat it. He held all his food in his hands and gnawed at it in

a similar fashion to that in which a boy will sometimes eat a crust of bread. When the rat had eaten all he wanted, he would carry the rest off to his hiding-place under a big bookcase; small stuff, such as grain, he would fill his mouth with until his cheeks looked as if he had a swollen face, but big pieces had to be carried as a dog carries a bone. He would run backwards and forwards until he had taken it all away, after which his amusement was to get hold of any loose sheets of newspaper that might be lying about, and pull them under the bookcase, where he tore them up into small pieces to make a nest of. His nest was generally cleared away in the morning by the housemaid, so every evening he had to start afresh.

"Whiskers" liked being petted, and would come and lie on my lap, or sit on my shoulder, while he was stroked and scratched, but as soon as I stopped he would scamper off again. He usually came when called by name, but the last thing at night he was sometimes very tiresome, for he knew quite well that he was wanted, and he would do anything rather than be caught and shut up. Once one got a firm grip of his slippery form he would give in, nor did he on any occasion try to get away when I had him in my hands. Very different was his behavior whenever I went up to his room to bring him out; then his one idea was to get, as quickly as he possibly could, up on to my shoulder.

Twice I thought I had lost him. On each occasion he got up a chimney, but each time, when called, he came down again. One night he really did get out of his room, and what was worse got outside the house. For a week there was no trace of him, but one day a dog was seen scratching excitedly at an old disused grate in an outbuilding, so knowing "Whiskers'" liking for sooty places I drove the terrier away,

and then went down on my hands and knees before the dirty, old fireplace, and called "Whiskers," "Whiskers." In the silence that followed I thought I heard something move, so I pushed my arm up the dirty, sooty chimney. Instantly small feet clasped my fingers, and my rat came down, clinging to my arm. He was black with soot, very thin, his fur, which had been sleek, was harsh and staring, while he was covered with bites from head to foot. It was evident he had fought some other rat, and I can only hope he killed the strange one, for it practically killed him. At first it seemed as if he would get over the affair all right, for his wounds gradually healed, and he was as tame and confident as ever. But he never recovered his old sleek look, he never got fat again, and gradually got weaker and weaker; at last he cared for nothing but to lie and be petted, while the only things he would eat were eggs and cooked chestnuts. Chestnuts he had always been extraordinarily fond of; he liked them hot and would not touch them uncooked, but no luxuries could save him, and the end came some months from the time of his escape, and when he was just two years old. Poor old "Whiskers," I believe any one of the family would rather have lost a pet dog, for a more affectionate and intelligent creature no one could wish to meet with.

Having found the much-abused brown rat so charming when one got to know it intimately, I next tried to get a pair of the old English rats, but so scarce are they that I had considerable trouble before I could do so. By the bye, it has been stated that these rats are now extinct in Great Britain, but this is not correct. They occur in some seaports, and in certain seaside places, but to procure a couple of live ones is a very difficult matter, and it was some time before I did so. At last I got into communication with a

rat-catcher in Plymouth, who caught several on one of the old wooden ships and sent me two of them. Pretty little things they were, slaty-black and elegantly shaped, more like large mice than the ordinary rat, but mice and rats are very closely connected, and the ordinary house mouse is but a tiny rat, whereas the water rat, and those short, stumpy mice found in meadows, are a quite distinct family and correctly speaking should be called voles. Of course, the brown rat often lives by the water side, where it soon drives out the water-voles, and takes up its abode in their holes, from which, if alarmed, it can dive into the water and swim away, for it can swim almost as well as the creatures it has turned out.

To go back to my two black rats, I soon found that they were just as particular about washing themselves as ever "Whiskers" had been. They would sit on their hind legs, pass their paws rapidly over head and ears, licking each paw between each wipe, then with the same hurried manner run over their body fur, while lastly their "waistcoat part" received careful attention, but I never saw them clean their tails, nor did I ever see "Whiskers" touch his after he was a very tiny little creature. Once, when he could just sit up, I saw him pick up his tail in his paws and lick it, but though I saw him clean himself many hundreds of times afterwards he never went further than the base of the tail, and I very much doubt if any of the tribe clean this most useful organ. An examination of numbers of rats trapped or otherwise killed during wet periods has always shown them with dirty tails, often caked with mud, though the rest of their fur seems spotlessly clean. When just trotting along a rat carries its tail clear of the ground, but when it jumps the tail hits, or rather is pressed, on the floor, and assists it to spring. In this way no doubt a good

deal of dirt is picked up, but that seems no reason for not cleaning it off again, especially when one considers how particular the rat is about the rest of its person, even the youngest one hating to get a spot of dirt on its fur.

Speaking of young ones reminds me of an incident I saw a little time ago when moving the pair of black rats that I have just mentioned, from their usual quarters to a glass-sided case in which I wished to photograph them. The family consisted of the two old rats and two young ones, the latter being old enough to crawl about, but they had not yet got their eyes open. Mrs. Rat no sooner found that her babies were exposed to the public view, than she ran across to a wooden box which was at the end of the case, looked in, and examined the hay it contained, then ran back, seized the first little black creature by the back of its neck, and bore it off in the same way a cat will carry her kitten. She hid it under the hay in the box, and then came back for number two, and holding her head high in the air did the same for that, though they must have been a heavy burden for her. I put the family back at once into their usual cage, for I thought it was a shame to worry the good little mother.

Since then this same pair of rats have had a second family, seven in number, but what makes the fact of interest is that while five of the young ones were of the typical slaty-black color, two were of a light brown tint, so that it is obvious that brown specimens of the Old English rat are not, as has been suggested, a local race, but are merely a variety that might occur anywhere, and which would survive or not according to whether their color was an advantage or disadvantage to them among their surroundings.

It is rare for a rat family, Old English or Norwegian, to number only two, anything from six to ten being the

general size of the litters; sometimes they will be even larger, and when one remembers what devoted mothers the old does are, that they generally bring up the lot, and it is said have six or seven families in the year, it becomes a matter for wonder, not that it is difficult to keep rats down, but that the country is not overrun with them.

Their enemies are few. First and foremost comes man, with his poisons, traps, and ferrets; but in the country he is assisted by the white or barn owl, which haunts barns, outbuildings, and other places beloved by the rats; it comes forth with the dusk, as do the rats and mice from their hiding-places, and though it is hardly big or strong enough to tackle a full-grown male brown rat, it accounts for many half grown and weakly ones, swooping down upon them on its noiseless wings, and bearing one off before it knows danger is about. Young and innocent rats, venturing for the first time from their snug nest of straw, paper, rags, feathers, and other odds and ends, are picked up in the owl's claws before they have time to turn and bolt back into their hole. It is at this age that the farmyard cat can take heavy toll; she will wait and watch where they come to steal the pigs' food, or else at the mouth of the hole, and woe to that young family on which she fixes her attention, for she will leave no survivor. The weasel is another creature that helps to keep the rat population within bounds, but it again seldom tackles a full-grown rat, though it does considerable damage to the rising gen-

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eration. It is practically the only animal that wages war when the rat takes to a hedgerow, woodland, or stream-side life, during the pleasant summer months. Winter with its wet and uncomfortable conditions, to say nothing of shortness of food, generally drives such rats back to the farmsteads, to thieve again from their old foe. Indeed, full-grown brown rats have but this one enemy really to fear, and if at his hands they undergo constant persecution, one cannot but admit they thoroughly deserve it, for more mischievous creatures the wide world cannot provide, and there are few parts of the globe where they are not a serious pest. But before rats are doomed to total extinction—that is to say if those bodies who at various times have threatened to clear the land of rats could possibly carry out their proposals—it would be better to hear what else scientific men have to say on the subject and to hear more of their suggestion that in the brown rat, with its stay-at-home flea, we have a safeguard from a dreadful disease, which still flourishes in countries where black rats carrying the wandering flea are plentiful. But I for one will never believe that rats could be totally exterminated; they may for a time be reduced in number or driven away from some given locality, but to wipe them out completely is a very different matter, and an army of the most expert rat-catchers would be overwhelmed by the task, so I strongly suspect that this much-persecuted tribe will continue to flourish.

Frances Pitt.

FORTUNA CHANCE.

By JAMES PRIOR.

CHAPER XXXIII.

LOOSE ENDS.

Press bore the upsetting of her household with grim composure. She put the two sisters in Fortuna's chamber and Fortuna in Roland's. She refused to admit Endage, who remained at Sutton. She did all the work herself, she seemed untirable, body, tongue and temper, while Bridget did little more than gape and waddle. The coach was housed at Kirkby, whence Drew rode over every day to do the errands. The rest of the men were sent home on horseback. Mistress Allott did not again visit the Gipsies. On the morrow her sister was too ill and could not spare her presence; next day she was better and not so urgent to have her go. There was a third day's delay in hiring additional horses, and by then the Gipsies had gone from Bldworth, whither could not be learnt. Whereat the ladies expressed and probably felt only a moderate degree of dissatisfaction, though Mistress Allott considered that she was still half-a-guinea in Zuba's debt.

On the Thursday morning of the next week Press found gorse on the doorstep, a large twig. She sat up the next night in the kitchen. A little after midnight Alfa tapped on the door and was immediately and quietly let in. There was tragedy on her face, but on the table there was a cloth laid with a very good cold supper—good enough for Mr. Roland. The improper comparison had suggested itself to Press, but she had wrathfully thrust it aside. She invited Alfa to sit and eat.

"Nay," said the Gipsy, "I have rid thirty mile here, and must ride thirty back afore the cock at the farm begins calling for the day."

"You've the more need to eat. Sit you down."

"Nay, I've nayther need nor appetite."

"Sit you down. D'ye think I'm made so as to bend any way I'm pulled? I'll neither ask nor listen until you've eat."

To humor her and save time Alfa sat, ate a morsel, then put the plate from her. It would seem that the point of honor was all Press was concerned with. She insisted no more but said:

"And now what is it?"

"He's took."

"Took? Lord help us! Where?"

"I dunno; a long way off."

"Then how d'you know?"

"A bad un what I'm suspekful on comed to my place day afore yesterday, drunk, and talked very big of it. Oh, it's true! Oh, it's too true! I feel it."

"A man?"

"A bad man."

"How does *he* know?"

"He has selled his blood to the devil."

"There's more talk o' that sort o' thing than proof."

"His own mammy says so. He says so hissen sometimes when he's drunk. He says he seed him in a little prison-room sitting on a stone by hissen. Oh, it's true, and too true."

"Then the Lord help her!"

At that moment Mistress Allott entered the kitchen in slippers and dressing-gown for some night-need of Mistress Ann's, and was mightily surprised to find how it was occupied. A few hushed words told her all that could be told.

"True or false——" she said.

"I wish it wouldn't be true," said Alfa.

"Neither my sister nor my niece must know of this."

"Madam," said Press, "if you'll keep it from Mistress Ana, I'll take precious good care of my lady not knowing."

"I must go," said Alfa. "When I know more I'll come again. If you know a prayer, ayther on ye, good again the devil, say it every blessed night. We shall need all the good what good words can do us. Now I'm a-going. 'Tis a heavy load Chuvion has to carry."

"Stop a minute," said Mistress Allott; "before you go I've two restitutions to make."

She went up-stairs and returned with the necklet. At the sight of which Alfa's eyes darkened from grief to wrath.

"I hoped I'd seed the last o' that trumpery," she said.

"Wait," said Mistress Allott; "this comes second. You gave me a message; I want to have it quite correct before I pass it on. You took a little gift, you said, from somebody here to somebody at Sutton. Was the latter somebody a Miss Bell Brandith?"

"I've took it once. Why would you want me to take it again?"

"Because if it is, then that other somebody must be Mr. Bob Radage."

"Everybody knows," said Press, "as Bod Radage of the Woodhouse is courtin' Bell Brandith of Sutton Manor."

"He gived it to me."

"As Mr. Bob's go-between."

There was a great lightening of Alfa's face. The stormy gloom which had troubled its sorrow passed, and left the sorrow pure.

"If I could be glad of oat," she said, "I would be glad o' that; but I can't be."

"But there's something else," said Mistress Allott, and held out the necklet. "He has sent it back, and I think you ought to take it back." Alfa's hand showed no willingness to receive. "Why won't you?"

"These walls are a-smuddering me;

I think they lay heavier on you, lady, than you knows on. If you'll come out I'll talk; I can't breathe here."

It seemed a strange shuddery proposal to that elderly lady in her dressing-gown. It was one o'clock of the night and the wind howled across the moor. She did not say no, but neither her face nor her feet made any sign of yielding. Press went softly out, fetched an ample furry cloak and hood of Fortuna's and whispered:

"It's my long ears as she's afraid of, ma'am. Let me put this on over your nightgown. 'Twon't do you no harm to be just outside the door for a minute, to humor her. I'll stand so as to be out of hearing of your talk but in hearing of your call. There's nothing to be frightened on."

Mistress Allott went out, reluctant, half afraid. But Alfa was not content to stop by the door; she led her through the gate, and that was to the edge of the moor. Overhung by a sky of dusky gray streaked with black, it lay before their eyes, the sombre habitation of obscurity, a dark trackless pathway for the wind, apparently as limitless as the night itself. It was Alfa who spoke first, and to ask, not to answer. Her pony had trotted up to her, and stood as if listening.

"Why did he send it back, lady?"

"I told you why."

"I'm in a hurry to ha' went, but I'll stop to hear it again."

"Because your need is so much greater than his."

"Was that all? 'Twarn't just becos a poor Gipsy gived it, and him an English gentleman?"

"No."

"That was quite all what he said."

Alfa waited awhile for the answer which Mistress Allott hesitated to give.

"Maybe, lady, you think as you've answered me? 'Deed, there's a many questions what can be answered by a

silence like this, wi' noat in't but the rustle o' the wynd among the dry brackens, but this ain't one o' them anyhow-answered questions."

Mistress Alllott was surprised at herself. It was as if she heard the spirit of the place calling her out of her conventions. The sweeping wind seemed to speak to her, the dark earth to counsel her, the overhanging sky to warn her. She felt herself to be both less and more than ever she had done before, proportionally less, absolutely more. But still she resisted those natural importunities, said no to Alfa and herself.

"As you have refused one of my questions, girl, you must not be surprised if I do the like by you."

"There's a difference, lady. Yourn was on'y the last end of a bit o' twattle, mine's such as ain't hardly axed twice in a lifetime."

Mistress Alllott almost submitted to the conjuration of those dark eyes, which she felt though she could not see.

"There's on'y anudder minute I can spare you for it out of all the minutes from now to never."

Again Alfa waited; half that minute, three-quarters of it. It was that that conquered, that waiting, so patient yet so vehement. Mistress Alllott felt in anticipation a pain, as it were a birth-pain. She understood at last that she could not keep the secret. Merely to refrain from uttering it would have been to let it out, a course less honorable by far.

"He returns it, Alfa, only because you did not give it as a token."

"A token, lady? What does dat mean?"

Whatever the rebellion of her pruderies how could she but answer as she did?

"It means a lover's gift."

"Then 'tis his still," said Alfa.

Just that; but the difference in the

tone expressed a world of difference in the feeling. With a word she bade Chuvion wait for her outside the gate, while she led Mistress Alllott back to the house. As they went she said:

"Lady, I shall find out who did it. He shan't die for anudder man's work."

"I don't wish to discourage you, but you did not say so before."

"No, I've been that weightied as I couldn't see, couldn't feel, couldn't hardly think. Now the weight's off."

Press came to the door holding the kitchen candle. Mistress Alllott could see even by its dim outdoor shine the crimson light that blazed from the girl's face, as if with the combustion of her fears. Next moment Alfa was out of sight, and Mistress Alllott went in, greatly disturbed, with the necklet still in her hand, yet glad at heart not to have been the ruin of so splendid an exhibition of joy. Press must have seen something of it too, for she said as she shut the door:

"You'll very like think me an impertinent, ma'am."

"Very like, Press."

"And a fool."

"That's less likely."

"I come very near just now to kissing that Gipsy."

"You might have gone nearer than very near without being either."

"Well, ma'am, I couldn't feel that sure how the family ud take it."

In two weeks Mistress Ann had sufficiently recovered to travel to Ash-over. Mistress Alllott no longer talked of Bath since the news of Roland's arrest. The aunts would have taken Fortuna with them but she would not leave her solitude. The day before their departure they two made a ceremonious call, as was their duty, at Annesley, Fortuna having again refused to accompany them. As they drove down thither they perceived that the gain-producing part of the estate was in good order, but nothing was done

merely to delight the eye or gladden the mind. The pleasure-gardens were neglected. There was an air of desolation about the ancient house itself; no sight or sound of man. Untrimmed ivy overran its irregular many-gabled front, hung in rags from its walls and darkened its mullioned windows. The visitors were shown into a dull ill-warmed drawing-room, where they received a just civil message from Mistress Chaworth begging on the ground of her indisposition to be excused from seeing them. Her son came in to them and made what lame excuse for her he would or could. He was more natural when he expressed indignation that the sword given by them for an honorable purpose should have been used to commit so foul a murder.

"If it gets out that 'tis ours," he said, "as I doubt it will, 'twill be a stain on our name as long as there are Chaworths."

"He is a cousin of yours," said Mistress Allott.

"So much the worse, madam, by a good deal, begging your pardon. He could not be so distant from us as our liking is. There's just one advantage, such as 'tis, from this infernal cousinship: when strangers call him a villain I may take the liberty to call him a dirty villain."

"Nephew," said Mistress Ann, "he's as innocent of that crime as yourself. Ay, more innocent, for he does not charge it upon anybody."

"Madam, the sword was found in the very place. Our sword, by God!"

"A sword is no great matter compared with a young life. If 'twere your body now that were in danger I should feel more pity for you than for that bit of steel."

"Madam, isn't the dishonor more than my flesh."

"Hush, Ann," said Mistress Allott with a warning hand up; "spare us that retort. Be satisfied with the con-

sciousness of it. Nephew Billy, I'm not going to try and dissuade you of your opinion; I only want to make a bargain with you on your own terms. This poor boy of ours whom you accuse of this villainy——"

"Madam, I don't pretend to like that word, but 'tis the one that everybody uses. You should hear how they talk. By God, they do talk! And our sword!"

"They will talk, I know. That at least they will do. But if it were to come out that he had escaped scot-free, but returned and by an act of heroism voluntarily put his hands into the shackles for another man's sake, a stranger's, a poor laborer's? What would be your opinion then of all that talk? Would not you begin to suspect that your sword was drawn to defend life, not to take it?"

"Madam, I don't see it afore me."

"If? Come, Billy, if."

"If, ma'am, if? Why then, Aunt Allott, in that case I'd take off my hat to him afore all the world and say, 'Cousin, I've done you a damned wrong.' But——"

"Nephew, let the 'but' stand by for the present."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

IN FORMA PAUPERIS.

It was the day on which the judges of assize entered Nottingham. After the long ride from Leicester, attended all the way by the sheriffs and gentlemen of the respective counties, Mr. Justice Bond was glad to sup alone at the judges' lodgings at Weekday Cross. While his brother judge, Mr. Baron Prawle, had accepted Mr. Rothwell Willoughby's hospitality, he himself had declined Mr. Alderman Trigge's. He had not been tempted by the rival attractions of assembly or theatre, nor even by the great main of cocks at the "White Lion" between the gentlemen of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. He sat alone, in a long

room furnished with official shabbiness, sparsely yet heavily, and its musty chilly atmosphere seemed to have been stagnating and desponding there ever since its last occupation eight months ago. The coal fire fitfully lit up the dull fire-irons and a breadth of uncarpeted floor. Two wax candles set in their pewter candlesticks at the head of the long oaken table sufficiently illuminated the judge's plate, his grave face and white hands. They shone through his bottle of port wine with some show of blood-red animation, but the twin shadow of him which they cast behind his chair was lost in the many shadows which made but one shadow. Of the farther end of the room facing him nothing was to be seen but the stiff ghosts of one or two chairs and the glimmer on the wall of the glazing of some invisible picture. Still the judge ate his woodcocks and veal sweetbread and sipped his port, all the gift of the high sheriff, with the leisurely satisfaction of a man whose moods were not subject to externals. At the bottom of the table, where he could either see it or not see, lay a crimson bag plumped out with what it held. It had been left there by his clerk when he went off to complete the evening at the Crown Inn with some new-made friends.

Beach entered, the caretaker of the lodgings, who also acted as the judges' butler, footman, messenger, and if need were, valet. A gaunt man with a white face narrowly oblong, he was garbed in a plain black suit as ancient and lustreless as the furniture, and wore his thin gray hair imprisoned in a leathern cue. He announced that a lady had called who begged the favor of a private interview with his lordship. As if in protest the judge took up again the knife and fork which he had just laid down. Said Beach as if in answer:

"I told the lady your lordship was a-

supping. She said she would humbly wait your lordship's pleasure; only she wished her request to be laid before your lordship."

He filled up the judge's glass and pattered at the dull fire.

"What name did she give?" asked the judge by and by.

"She excused herself, my lord. She said her present name your lordship wouldn't know at all, and her old un-'twas so long ago your lordship would have forgot."

Beach changed the judge's plate and served cheese and celery. The judge felt the lassitude both of fatigue and growing repletion; his further questioning, like his dealing with the cheese and celery, was a mere toying.

"What is she like?"

"A lady, my lord."

The crisp cry of the celery between his lordship's teeth sufficiently filled the gap between that answer and this question:

"Old or young?"

"Betwixt and between, my lord."

"Like you and me, Beach?"

"No, my lord, your lordship is as much nearer to the between as she is to the betwixt."

"Your compliment, Beach, is dubious. But what of yourself?"

"'Tisn't proper for the likes o' me to occupy the same comparison as your lordship."

"Your modesty, Beach, is as dubious as your compliment."

As the judge's plying of knife and fork became more and more play, so his inner review of half-forgotten faces, once young, now "betwixt and between," became more and more of an occupation, a somewhat sombre occupation for any man nearing fifty. His face gradually took on a pondering brooding ill-satisfied expression, which made Beach think an apology for the cheese necessary.

"I walked the town ower, my lord,

but couldn't find a nounce weight o' ripe Stilton."

"She did not mention her business?"

"No, my lord; I will inquire on't, my lord."

Beach evidently had his proper share of decorous curiosity. His lordship did not gainsay; he was possessed by a brooding inactivity. The caretaker went out. When presently he returned the judge had left the table and was seated by the fire.

"The lady says, my lord, her business has to do wi' the past and also wi' the present."

The judge felt a touch of obscure amusement at the serving-man's balked inquisitiveness.

"A very proper limitation, Master Beach, the future being God's alone. Even my jurisdiction extends no further than to the edge of now."

Beach having removed the cheese and left the wine, the judge motioned to him to remove that also.

"I shall want the table-room," he said.

"Please your lordship, his lordship Mr. Justice Blyth last assizes didn't want for room ayther for his bottles or his papers. At the day's end—I should say night's end—sooner than crowd ayther of 'em he put himself unner the table."

"And the next day?"

"He was as clear and as clean as the Leen, my lord. I myself went up-street and heerd him charge the jury in the Pritchett manslaughter case. There warn't a word or a thought out o' place, my lord. I've heerd the bishop preach on 'A little wine for thy stomach's sake,' but he warn't to be compared with his lordship laying it down that the plea of intoxication was not an excuse but an aggravation."

"And where was his lordship as he did so?"

"Where, my lord? Where? Where but on the bench, my lord."

"He ought to have been in the dock."

Beach's consternation was manifest; he seemed by some reflective process of condemnation to have judged himself guilty of that which he had heard.

"My lord! my lord! I beg your lordship's pardon! What have I said?"

"Nothing, doubtless, but what you can justify."

"Certainly, my lord, certainly! Of course his lordship was only chiding the drunkenness of common folk; I couldn't anyhow unnerstand it otherwise. Gentlemen of his quality, who take their pleasure like gentlemen and are carried to bed by their own livery sarvants, aren't to be judged by me or anybody like me."

"Quite so, Beach; they shall be judged by themselves. And now for the lady."

Having glanced towards her his thoughts immediately went back, and when his visitor entered the room were busy picturing a judge standing in a dock beside a more excusable culprit and passing sentence upon himself for the other's crime. He rose but was still occupied mainly with the self-tickling of a sombre applause for the cleverness of that far-fetched conceit, as the lady advanced slowly out of the dark by the door to the half-dark by the table; a veiled figure muffled close in hood and cloak. The judge's thoughts under compulsion returned to the actual; with the cool courtesy of a stranger he invited her to be seated, inquired her pleasure.

"I did right, my lord," answered she, "in not sending in my old name; you have forgotten."

"Yet my memory is generally, I believe, fairly trustworthy. With your permission I submit it to the test."

But even then the vibrations of a forgotten voice were passing tremors through his forgetfulness, slight tremors that were not yet remembrances. She removed the veil; she threw her

hood back. He half knew her; he quite knew her.

"I was once Fortuna Chance," she said, "at your lordship's pleasure;" with the stress of a mournful mockery on that word "pleasure."

Yes, it was she! And not so much altered as might have been expected, in spite of the sad responsibilities that had settled on her face. For half a second, that or more, he had a difficulty in putting between himself and her the proper separation of twenty years. The last time they had met, had met and parted, they had been so near, had shared so complete a oneness of rapture and despair. Half a second or more. But successfully ambitious gentlemen past mid life are used to being crossed by the unsubstantial ghosts of their boyish aspirations, ardors, follies; they have learnt to lay them without knock of the knee and trembling formulas of conjuration; or if with any with but a mental shrug of the shoulders as much contemptuous as compunctious. He felt instinctively that something was going to be demanded of him which he would have to refuse. His next utterance therefore was of the nature of the defensive.

"I believe I have to congratulate you upon a change of name."

She was too thoroughly disillusioned to fancy there was anything in that either of reproach or regret; she clearly understood how expeditiously he had jerked all responsibility on to the shoulders of a shadowy husband.

"Yes, I go now under the name of Fortuna Surety. I retain my fortunate Christian name."

He was thick-skinned to the prick of whatever undermeaning might be therein.

"I met a Mr. Surety once when riding the circuit. I believe a Somersetshire gentleman."

"My lord, I have come to speak to you about—my son."

The hesitation over the last two words was just so long as was necessary to translate the "our" that was in her mind into the "my" of pride and propriety. She did not indeed once think of saying "our;" but it was in her thoughts all the time; as she took it for granted that it must be in his.

"What may the young gentleman's name be, madam?"

"Roland."

"Ah."

He felt a certain illogical jealousy of the son's intrusion. The supposed husband he had willingly accepted as a convenience, but that young cub—he was sure that he should heartily dislike him, had already begun to do so. Nevertheless he resolved to do what he could for him, rather for his own ease' sake than for conscience or the mother. He supposed that she came to beg the reversion of some clerkship or other office which lay within his gift or influence.

"What can I do for young Mr. Roland?"

"Save his life, my lord!"

Hitherto she had kept a perfect self-restraint, now she let it all go together. She fell on her knees before him, bringing her face contorted with the agony of petition out of the half-shade into the full candle-light. He was startled both at the likeness and the difference. He remembered, nay, saw rather like a present thing, how once he had knelt to her; not, alas! in vain.

"Madam, arise!"

As he attempted to raise her, she clasped his in her own uplifted hands.

"Let me remain, my lord!"

"It is not for my honor, madam, that while I stand you kneel."

"I feel more certain of you, my lord, kneeling, somewhat securer about my son."

"Nay, rise, madam, and what little

interest I have, so far as without prejudice to my oath and conscience I may pledge it, is yours and his."

She suffered herself to be raised and reseated. Nevertheless she experienced a certain loss of confidence, as she had anticipated that she would. And rightly, for her face being again in semi-obscurity, that poignant contrast of similarities and differences was blurred back into the common variance between a girl of twenty and a woman of forty; also her red-rimmed eyeballs lost their outstarting, appealing look. Still the judge, though he had rid himself of the clasp of her hands and was seated three yards off, spoke with a kindly interest.

"You mentioned your son, madam, as being in some danger. I hope——"

His glance went towards the crimson bag which he had placed upon the table.

"Yes, you are to try him, my lord."

"Upon what charge?"

"He is innocent, my lord!"

"I have not yet read the depositions. I was just setting about doing so."

"Be assured he is innocent, my lord; most assuredly! Otherwise I would not have troubled your lordship. I am used to suffering in silence. Or if there be guilt in any respect it is mine. I threw him away on a dead cause. I am liable to such an impulse of waste, it would seem."

"He must be very young. What is his age?"

She was on the point of crying out, "Who should know if you do not?" but using some self-violence restrained her answer within the narrow limits of the matter of fact.

"Nineteen, my lord."

She thought she had said everything, had stripped herself and him. But he had not so good a reason, or thought he had not, for remembering the date of their separation. Still his hasty back-

reckoning did at least get the year right, helped by the too lawyerish recollection that Lord Macclesfield's disgrace befell about the same time. And nineteen from twenty-one leaves—Instead of being stirred, disquieted, smitten, self-accused and convicted, he let in the arithmetico-cynical thought: "Why, she hardly gave herself a widow's proper period before admitting consolation." The mother's feelings escaped from the confinement into which she had constrained them.

"Only nineteen, my lord! And so fine, so handsome a boy! So like——"

The judge filled up in his own way that yawning rift.

"Yourself, madam, I hope."

"His father, my lord."

She was sensitive to the frigidity of his compliment, had meant to stop there, had stopped; but suddenly the closure was taken off from her mouth and words burst forth anew.

"No, my lord, his eyes are blue, and mine, you—" she stayed herself on the brink of saying "you remember"—"you see, are hazel or brown"—observe that even at such a time she rejected that possible dash of green—"hazel or brown, I don't know which—"

The "and you don't care," abruptly omitted, gave a sound of manifest incompleteness to the sentence; which was why the judge again looked towards her and not for the sake of her eyes.

"The more reason," he said, "that Mr.—" he had forgotten the name—"that the father should bestir himself on the young man's behalf."

She understood that he had expressed a preference for her absence. What she uttered was the mere ice of emotion.

"He bids fair, my lord, to be of the other side."

"Is it possible that he is hostile?"

"Worse, my lord, indifferent, stone-cold."

Which, so sadly uttered, colored him in swift succession with two moods; first to purse up still more the strings of his emotions, as if saying: "Her husband does not interest himself; why should I?" and secondly to relax them into a more generous pity. But Fortuna had risen, and by rising seemed to have thrown off part of the restraint that had been on her bearing, on her voice, on her eyes, on her feelings.

"Oh, my lord!" she said with outstretched hands, "if I could only convey to you what I feel without the imperfection of words! If I could in an instant make yours what is mine! I was content, my lord, with him, with only him; without him I am horribly alone, have not even myself. Oh the cold lying, the cruelty of circumstance! They found a hat—if only that hat could speak!—a hat and a sword. Think how horrible a thing it would be, my lord, if you—you were to—It's death, my lord! death to him and me!"

"I would fain hope otherwise. But in any case I, madam, am therein but the poor instrument of justice and the king."

"Oh, we are all poor instruments; and none so much as I, I who have so much to say, so much need to say it, and stand with brain palsied and tongue oppressed even by that overmuch of matter and urgency. Only nineteen, my lord, and to have attributed to him the butchery of a hardened criminal!"

"Madam, what would you have me do?"

"Know more, my lord, than goes in by the ear. Oh, my lord, 'tis a narrow entrance to the soul, and if you have no other you will do a terrible injustice upon him and me and yourself."

"A just judge, madam, admits of no access but by his hearing; that is the one strait inlet to the shrine of his

judgment; every other savor of intrigue, back-influence and bribery."

"My lord, he came to me; 'twas a terrible night; there was no color on his face; he seemed to exhale terror. I cried out. I saw death after him."

It was untimely trifling, but it occurred to him that "exhale" was a favorite word of his own, extraordinary balle of much that might as well have gone by common carrier.

"Are you to be called as a witness, madam?"

"No, my lord, I suppose not. 'Tis all in such a horrible tangle; the truth has so many shadows of falsehood cast upon it that itself looks like a black lie. Our own counsel fears to call me, and the other side is secure without me. My lord, he stole down before break of day; I heard him; his footstep was light but I had not slept, and——"

"Madam, be advised by your counsel. Bethink yourself that if anything material to the case came to my ears, I might be impelled by my duty, compelled by my oath to have it brought into court."

"My lord, you have prejudged us!"

"Not so, madam; my mind is clear of any bias whatever."

"That is the hardest thing you have said yet."

"No, the kindest, everything considered. I would fain impress upon you your learned counsel's advice; that by your prayers and your silence you can best serve your son's interest."

"You bid me appeal to God's hearing against your deafness?"

"I must beg you to excuse me; I have much to do before morning. My time, even at this late hour, is not my own."

His eyes glanced aside to the bag on the table, and hers followed.

"Is it there, my lord?"

She eyed that crimson bag of modest appearance with affright as though within it were hidden a death—two

deaths, as though it were stained with the waste of two lives.

"Pray read it, my lord, while I wait. I shall know by your face."

"Nay, madam, such a course would neither be salutary for you nor convenient for me. I need to collect my thoughts, you to summon your resolution."

"My resolution is summoned, what there is of it, both summoned and summed up. I have enough to sit and face your reading without a murmur or a sigh or the quiver of a lip. I have not enough to bear the torture of another's day's suspense; one iron day hammered out to the length of a hundred. And such a hammering, my lord!"

She had her hand on her heart as she spoke.

"You do not know what you ask. The perusal may take a considerable time. There will be this to be weighed and reweighed, that to be noted, this and that to be compared, the whole to be digested."

"You shall not know, my lord, whether I suffer or am numb."

"You might mistake the reading of my face."

"I have never misread it yet, my lord. You will generously grant this my last request. I will walk away when you have done and make no appeal against your verdict."

There was probably a surface prick of remorse, there was possibly a deep-seated obscure stirring of sentiment, there was undoubtedly the drawing of expediency. The judge saw a means of dismissing an inconvenient suitor without further trouble; he knew he could trust her word. He made only one objection more.

"I am but mortal man, subject in everything to error of judgment. My opinion may differ largely from that of the jury, from that of any twelve men whom you could select."

"You have the reputation, my lord, well deserved I doubt not, of an able and learned judge without fear or favor. I shall be quite sure. I shall walk away without more words."

The judge bowed to her, she curtsied to him; that was their farewell. Then he went to the table, shook the papers out of the bag, selected that endorsed with Roland Surety's name, drew the inkstand towards him, sat down, selected a pen, just trying it on his thumb-nail, and then began to read. There was no robe or tippet, no bustle of javelin-men, no mouthing of oaths, no pompousness of oratory, no ranks of eager onlookers, to distract the mind ever so little from its strained attention. There was no sound but the dry crackle of the leaves as the judge turned them over, or now and then the harsh twitter of his pen when he made a note. There was not half the length of the table between them. He sat with his feet under it, side face to her. By the light of the candles the slightest variation in his fine austere profile was visible to her steadfast gaze, the least wrinkling of his judicial forehead, the lifting of an eyebrow, the parting, closing or indrawing of a lip. And there was nothing extraneous about him that demanded even a momentary glance; no gleam of ring either on the hand that held the paper or that wrote, no knot or curl to his close wig, no flaunting ruffle to his shirt, no extravagance of lace on his cravat. How divergent were their thoughts, that world-possessed man's, that one-ideaed woman's, as he read and sufficiently noted his with fugitive ink, as she looked and made indelible record of hers with the stylet of pain.

Still he read, and on his legible countenance settled dark and yet darker the frown of righteous condemnation. The room was quite still but for the crackle of the paper, the occasional squeak of the quill. St. Mary's chimed the three-

quarters, and then after a long interval the hour, ten slow resounding strokes upon the ponderous bass. The woman's son lay nearer to it than herself, and she wondered, without for an instant relaxing the pain of her attention, whether he too heard; whether to him also it counted out ten iterations of a black verdict. She sat in the half-dusk, rigid, stirring neither hand nor foot, her eyes always at one point. The wavering glimmer reflected by prominence of nose or chin only made her expression the more grimly inscrutable.

Twice indeed she came forward and snuffed the candles; but the judge did not look her way even then. Having settled to the reading, his disciplined concentration was never disturbed. He took an intellectual pleasure in the connotation of evidence, the heightening of the salient, the obliteration of the irrelevant, the elucidation of the obscure. The studious severity of that face turned to the candles was no more comparable to Nimrod's jocund outdoor flush, than his safe wooden support was to the hunter's precarious seat upon the living and moving. And yet he felt in his heart the joy of the sport; it gleamed guardedly out of his eyes, gave a curbed curve of triumph to his lips and warmed into ardor the rigors of his intellectuality. He rode huntsman-like, marshalling that yelping pack of evidence, whipping it into clean order, dexterously putting it on the true scent, firmly keeping it to a single purpose, victoriously conducting it from the mere nose-truth of suspicion to the view-holloa of probability, the long run with the zest of a fault cleverly repaired, and the glorious in-at-the-death who-hoop! of proof positive. The chase had been long, the pace rather sure than fast, and St. Mary's bells were merrily jangling the half-hour when he put the writing down. At the same moment Fortuna

rose, drew up her hood, resumed her veil and turned to go. Her expression was a matter of guess but her footing was perfectly steady. He had forgotten her presence; he felt as if he had been caught in an act of butchery; his self-possession was shaken. He rose, saying somewhat haltingly:

"Madam, I beg pardon for my obliviousness."

She was at the door before him, but it was opened from the other side and Baron Prawle appeared, wine-flushed, unsteadily legged, hilarious.

"Hoho!" said he. "I perceive, brother, that you have been improving the opportunity. May I ask, madam, how many letters there are to your fair name?"

"You might, sir," answered Fortuna, "if there were any reason for your inquiry."

"Reason. Nay, he and I are more than brothers in the fore part of the day, sit on the same bench, suck at the same 'anno Georgii Secundi,' eat off the same dry platter of firstlies, secondlies and thirdlies; but when court is adjourned he goes straight home like a good dull honest wiseacre, and thrusts his head into a bed-cap to keep night fancies out and day sobrieties in; whereas I put on my mad-cap, go forth and frequent those who speak many languages."

He still stood tipsily in the doorway, blocking it.

"If wisely done, sir, that should be instructive."

"Ay, madam, there you are! But they set a stalwart serving-man at the door to impound our hats, wisdoms, walking-canes, watches and other extranea before entrance, so that I' th' end I had but the wit left to bring away such scraps as '*bibe dum bibis*' and '*ἦ τίθι ἦ ἀτίθι*.'"

"Brother Prawle," said Judge Bond, "while you talk the lady stands."

"I beg ten myriads of pardons;

I shrink into material insignificance."

So saying the Baron did at least draw aside; with a quarter-curtsy the lady passed on. Bond would have followed her but was obstructed by his fellow of the bench, who not only stood in his way but held him by the lappet of his coat, saying:

"Nay, nay, my brother of the King's Bench! restrain your youthful ardor. You give your Daphne less than the fair hunting law; which is just so long as you shall take to sing with proper bibulous expression, 'Drink to me only with thine eyes.'"

Bond broke away from him without ceremony, but when he reached the outer door Fortuna had already passed through. He stepped into the roadway. It was unlighted; the only break to its gloom came from the transverse projection from the open doorway behind him of a band of feeble light, barred by his own black shadow. He could see nothing. Only he heard both up street and down, faint and yet fainter on the pavement, a distant foot-fall, one of which might be the echo of the other, and either of which might or might not be Mistress Surety's. He felt an inexplicable regret at having parted from her without the ceremony of a word.

The band of light took his eye across the narrow street to the paltry town-hall, which stood opposite, meanly indistinct, town-hall and jail in one. His thoughts went down to the prisoners in hold below ground; some of whom lay barred in with the certainty of a shameful death. He heard or thought he heard the clink of a chain. He hastened to disavow his first thought, that it might be Fortuna's son; who of course, being a county prisoner, was confined at the shire-jail, a hundred yards up street. He looked skywards; there was no sky visible, nothing but a uniform inscrutable blackness. Only nineteen! Which poignant thought

roused the self-defensive reflection: "Anyhow she was not long inconsolable." She who had sworn with an illegal or preterlegal solemnity, "Until death us do part"! He felt the down-street blast of the keen east wind; he shuddered, went in and shut the door on the street, the prison and his thoughts.

What resentment he might have entertained against Baron Prawle was mitigated by the relief he felt at not having to return to the sole company of that bag of depositions. There was therefore good-fellowship mixed with the acerbity of his opening sarcasm.

"You appear to have made good use of your time."

"Use, brother? You might say usury, were not that illegal and I a bulwark of legality. I have been cultivating the friendship of the best irrigated fellow I ever had the good hap to light on in this arid world."

"You too seem to have done your utmost to qualify its aridity. But what are the qualifications of that moist paragon of friendship?"

"He has a mistress with a name of twenty-seven letters, one more than the complete alphabet, and we have drunk a bumper to every letter of it."

The baron sat heavily down in the chair lately occupied by the justice; to whom the position may have suggested something. Anyhow he put the depositions *re* the Crown *v.* Roland Surety under the baron's eye, and said.

"Your wisdom must be ripe, rotten ripe."

"You give my brains the quality of a medlar?"

"Yes; therefore let them meddle with this. Give me your learned opinion on 't."

"Nay, I've other-guess work than to be following the banal deviations of your uninventive criminals. Do you ask me to prefer a blundered murder or botched larceny to the subtle intrica-

cies of a right of light or the elegant damages and detriments of a breach of promise? Roland Surety. Humph! Surety! What a fortune of a name for a blind-drunk dicer!"

But having the papers before his eyes, the baron slipped into a perusal of them. He was perfectly clear-headed; as though the vat into which he had poured so much port was not organ to the same body as his efficient brains. The justice unwittingly sat in Fortuna's chair; and being there did in some degree, whether through that wooden contact or some subtler prompting, feel with Fortuna. He kept his eyes willy-nilly upon the baron's rubicund visage uplighted by the candles and the wine. With some of her anxiety he scanned that snub nose and thick-lipped mouth for favorable signs; with some little of her heart-sinking watched the gradual assemblage about eyes and mouth of the condemnatory omens. Twice he arose, as though because he must, and snuffed the wasting candles. Meanwhile Prawle had concentrated on the document his attention as well as his vision; which however did not stay his learned brother from feeling the relief of sitting in the shade. Could it be that femininity was contagious, was communicable through wood?

At last the baron tossed the document aside, so carelessly that it fell to the ground.

"As I thought," he said. "What possessed you to present me with this

(To be continued.)

pikestaff whereon to exercise my undoubted genius for hair-splitting? Pshaw! the case requires no more than the common mechanical dexterity of a wood-chopper."

Bond rose, glad to shift his attitude, mental and physical.

"You look on it as a plain case?" said he.

"Plain? Where are your special-pleading wits, brother? You speak with the accent of an emotional linen-draper or of a love-lorn sempster suing *in forma pauperis*. Plain? The treason indeed is no great matter, but a loyal jury will lug it in with tother. *Nota bene*, I who care not for fish will eat it with murder sauce. Crab sauce I would say. Pugh! the man or lad, for he is no more, is hanged already, dead and buried. An expeditious coroner might save time by sitting on him the day after to-morrow concurrently with yourself. There's a Roland for your Oliver, a Surety for your Bond."

The proverbial connections, which the justice had not remarked before, of his own name with her son's gave him somewhat of a shock. He escaped, not as she had done, out into the dark street, but into the inner obscurity of his own thoughts. He sat by the shadowy hearth with his back to the candles, his face to the flickering unrevealing firelight. The baron, relieved of his mental tension, had immediately fallen forwards asleep and snored to the table.

CATASTROPHES IN NATURE.

The presence of highly sinister contingencies in Nature, of which the wreck of the "Titanic" has recently furnished such a haunting revelation, is a problem as difficult as it is familiar to the believer in a moral order of the world. It seems to stand in

harsh contradiction with that Divine recognition of the dignity and sanctity of human life which lies at the basis of our Christian faith. The Lisbon earthquake, said Goethe, did more to shake men's belief in God than all the scepticism of the eighteenth century.

It is unquestionable that the scant regard for man and his interests, which Nature, on occasion, displays, is largely responsible not only for the various atheisms which place some supreme irrationality, like material substance or unconscious will, on the throne of the Universe, but also for certain other opinions which have obscured or debased religious thought; for instance, that the Deity is "beyond good and evil," and hence not amenable to our moral standards, or the doctrine that catastrophes in Nature are God's judgments on human sin. Moreover, any discussion of the problem, from the point of view of belief in Divine Providence, is apt to be resented as "indecent trifling" with human feeling.

There is one consideration, however, which ought to give pause to those who shrink from affirming that "God is love and love creation's final law," because of the many facts which seem to contradict their creed.

If we reject this view of life, we do so, it may be presumed, in favor of some other which will better account for the facts; but can we find any other which will not utterly confound the reason as well as the heart?

There are, in the end, but two alternatives to our Christian faith. We may try to account for the so-called immoralities of Nature, by saying that God, or whatever Principle we may substitute for God, is either below morality or above it. The first was, in the main, the view adopted by that Naturalism which was so fashionable in the generation preceding our own. Its advocates used to maintain that the Power from which all things proceed is neither good nor evil, but non-moral.¹

¹ Non-moral, at any rate, as manifested in Nature, which, for Naturalism, is primary and fundamental. Nature, indeed, has often been described as if it were positively anti-moral, as in the famous indictments of Mill and Huxley. This, however, ought to be taken, not so much as a positive dogma, but rather as a *reductio ad absurdum* of the attempt to find in Nature the basis of the moral order.

In that case, it may be thought, our perplexities vanish. They only reappear, however, in the equally familiar, and more desperate, problem: how comes it about that the highest form of existence, which this non-moral Principle has assumed, on our planet at least, is a moral consciousness which sits in judgment upon it and all its works? It is needless to repeat the criticisms which have brought this view into general discredit. There is another alternative, however, which is more serious, which always has had, and perhaps always will have, a strange fascination for many minds. We may conceive of God as super-personal and hence as super-moral. The most consistent form which this view assumes is reached by a combination of Theism and Pantheism. The sum total of existence is not God and a world, but one universal Spirit, or experience, which includes and transcends all our finite experiences. Physical evils are mere illusion of our finite vision, which is incapable of viewing things from the standpoint of the whole. What are evils for us men may not be evils for God: they may subserve, and even enhance, the perfection of His universe. To put it quite nakedly but, I submit, quite justly, God, from our human point of view, is partly good and partly evil. The offensive nature of this conclusion is supposed to be evaded by the contention that our point of view is not absolute, is, in fact, not strictly true. But, now, how could we use the Deity's moral standard to criticise and condemn our own, unless, in some sense, it were already our own, although, forsooth, all that it can tell us is that our moral judgments are infected with radical falsehood? The result is moral scepticism, if we have the wit and hardihood to press the logic of the situation to the bitter end. This is becoming increasingly evident from the desperate straits to which these and

similar consequences have reduced Absolutism in our own day. In truth, the moral sophistry and intellectual confusion in which this whole plan for justifying the ways of God to man is involved, were exposed long ago by John Stuart Mill in his examination of Hamilton. The many experiments which have been made in the field of speculation, and that still more searching experiment which we call life, all go to show that when it comes to the choice between optimism and pessimism it is verily a case of all or none. Any compromise between them becomes in the end as fatal to consistency in thought and action, as would be the assumption, say, that twice two are five, to the accuracy of a mathematical theorem.

Even, therefore, if we could escape from the enigma of Nature's apparent malignancies, by denying that the Source of Nature is in conscious harmony with man's highest aspirations, our loss would be incomparably greater than our gain. We should have to surrender the one principle which explains most readily that ever-increasing correspondence between the world and our wishes which unquestionably does exist; likewise our one and only guarantee that this correspondence will one day be complete.

Meanwhile, of course, it is our duty to seek some reconciliation between the faith by which we live and facts which seem more or less in conflict with it. But we have a right to insist that even if the quest for such reconciliation meet with but very partial success, or, indeed, wholly fail, our faith is not thereby discredited. Our grasp of the scheme of things is far too slight to justify us in rejecting the one principle which so far renders man's life and destiny intelligible to us. It is the two-fold fact that whatever reason there is, is on our side, and that, as Paulsen says, the limits of our wits are

not the limits of existence, which at once explains and justifies that strange tolerance of the mystery of evil, which is to be found even among those who have suffered most "upon the rack of this tough world." We are led to expect that our solutions of life's enigmas will be very imperfect, so long as we know in part.

It is, therefore, a confessedly tentative effort to show that the presence of evil contingencies in Nature is not incompatible with belief in God to whom our highest ideals are sacred, that is the aim of the remarks which follow.

We shall begin with a confession which may seem only to aggravate the problem, but which points to its solution. Catastrophes in Nature are only extreme instances of something that is always with us, more or less. Man has had to pay for his supremacy over the earth, not only with the sweat of his brow, but frequently with his life's blood. How much of this is preventable need not concern us here. So much of it seems inevitable when any fresh campaign against Nature is undertaken, as is evidenced by the martyrs already claimed by the conquest of the air. Of those who fall in the warfare with Nature it may be truly said that "their roll-call follows the march of the sun round the globe and never terminates." Now all this inevitably suggests that the possibility of accidents is not accidental. It stands in some definite relation to the general constitution of Nature itself. Our first business, therefore, must be to determine just what this relation is. Our problem will then assume this form; is such a constitution of Nature compatible with belief in the Divine goodness?

In passing to the first point, it will be conducive to clearness if we state at the outset the conclusion to which we shall be led. The possibility of

natural catastrophes is the defect of Nature's qualities; it is due to those very characteristics of Nature, which make Nature amenable to the attainment of human ends and the enrichment of human life. This paradox may be illustrated by reference to three very familiar features of Nature's constitution.

In the first place Nature is a realm of contingency, or, in more popular language, of mere coincidences. It was this which led Hegel to declare roundly that Nature is a Bacchantic god. "The order of Nature, as perceived at a first glance," says John Stuart Mill, "presents at every instant a chaos followed by another chaos." A chaos in any absolute sense, Nature, so far as it is knowable, cannot be; but tried by an ideal standard, just as little is it a cosmos. What principle of order can any candid man say he discerns in the ragged outline of the world's seaboard, or in distribution of minerals in the bosom of the earth. Such facts, it will be said, are conformable to the ascertained laws of matter and energy.

By eternal laws
Of iron ruled,
Must each fulfil
The cycle of
Their destiny.

It is becoming ever clearer, I think, that in the mystic awe with which we contemplate the laws of Nature there is a good deal of superstition. But waiving this, the laws of Nature only tell us how things act once they are there. To the question, *e.g.*, why do things occupy just the positions they do, natural laws can give in the end no answer. But on this fact, which is for natural law, an inexplicable surd, the whole character and fate of our world depends. Now I contend the world is full of conjunctions of facts and events, which so far as any plan or principle which we can conceive of is concerned are mere coincidences. None the less,

it may be urged, in some way to us inscrutable, they fulfil Heaven's decree. But now, as we shall see presently, they may fulfil it all the better by being mere coincidences. Meanwhile, the presence of real contingency in our world may be illustrated by a very ancient theistic argument which has as its aim the banishment of chance, in any ultimate sense, from the universe. It was, I think, in criticising Lucretius that Cicero urged that the world could no more have arisen by chance, than could Homer's poems have been composed by shuffling and re-shuffling the letters of the Greek alphabet. Without denying this, we may fairly urge that such an argument would never even occur to anyone if it were not that the stream of events, in Nature, frequently reveals no principle of order any more than a heap of unsorted type. The idea of chance would never have been invented if it had not corresponded to some aspect of our experience. Such chance is certainly relative, not absolute. But it unquestionably exists in this sense: there are conjunctions of things and events which are irrelevant to any particular principle or purpose whatever. The many attempts that have been made to deny this, have only issued either in pretentious metaphysics or mere superstition.¹

Now this contingency in Nature has played an enormous part in the development of human personality and in the enrichment of human life.

It means, in the first place, that Nature exists in a form which is a perpetual challenge to us to re-mould it nearer to the heart's desire. This has necessitated initiative and enterprise, wisdom, self-sacrifice, and courage. Broadly speaking, the gains of civiliza-

¹ This alleged contingency will, perhaps, appear in a clearer light, if it be stated that it assumes the pluralist and pan-psychist view of the world, according to which the universe contains only spiritual beings of various degrees of individuality, struggling towards a harmony yet unattained.

tion have been, and have had to be, the fruits of moral advance.

Again, only a world with real contingency in it can be the "worthy match and mate" of personal spirits the core of whose nature is freedom. In a spirit of mistaken piety the world is often conceived of quite differently, as a divine drama, in which every event, however contingent or trivial it may appear, is indispensable to the final *dénouement*. In such a world there is no contingency, it cannot deviate a hair's breadth from its predestined path. Now, I submit, such a view of life vitiates our moral consciousness through and through. In the world which it depicts, personal effort is either meaningless or impious. If there is no contingency in Nature, where is there room for the exercise of moral freedom in man? Again, if each and every event is indispensable to the divine plan, our interference with the order of Nature, if such interference be real, is merely a thwarting of Providence. Finally, could the perfection attainable by a fatalistic universe satisfy the heart either of man or of God? Creation's final goal, according to our Christian faith, is a moral cosmos, a perfect society, a kingdom of heaven, which shall reveal, not only God's love towards his creatures, but their love towards Himself. But how can there be real love apart from moral freedom? So far, therefore, is contingency from being fatal to the moral order of the world that without it there could be no moral order whatever.

Once more, this contingency in Nature means that Nature is indefinitely plastic: it is not a system finished and complete, but contains within itself the possibility of many systems, i.e., can be manipulated for the attainment of human ends.

So far, then, we seem justified in the conclusion that the very reality of this disorder in Nature makes possible the

realization of a sublimer order of things, a higher human cosmos than would be possible without it.

It must be confessed, however, that there is a darker side to the situation. A world with real contingency in it contains not only the promise of successful achievement, but, alas, the possibility of failure and suffering. In particular, it is from these irrelevant conjunctions of things and events, that catastrophes in Nature, and life's most disastrous chances, come.

In the second place, Nature is a system of elements in unstable equilibrium, always tending towards equilibrium, by the line of least resistance. Its relatively unstable equilibrium, is what gives to the system of Nature its capacity of "doing work" as the physicists say. It thus plays into the hands of man for the attainment of his ends. All human labor, as John Stuart Mill has observed, consists in putting things into different positions; then Nature brings out the result of her own accord. All man's mastery of forces incalculably mightier than himself, "is obtained by arranging objects in those mixtures and combinations by which natural forces are generated, as when by putting a lighted match to fuel, and water into a boiler over it, he generates the expansive force of steam, which has been so largely available for the attainment of human purposes." But this very instability of Nature's elements taken in conjunction with that contingency which we have just noted, has its evil side; while, for instance, it enables the miner to dislodge the coal with a minimum of labor, it exposes him to the risk of falling roofs and the horrors of explosion. So everywhere the lack of balance between the forces of Nature is not only beneficent but full of menace to us men.

Finally, Nature is a system whose parts operate according to uniform

laws. Words would be wasted in any attempt to show that on this uniformity of Nature all human advance depends. Without it, as has been truly said, "science would be little better than a gipsy fortune-teller, and knowledge would assuredly not be power." With it, we can predict the future with ever increasing precision, and shape the world's course in accordance with our wishes.

But there is a malignant aspect to this reign of law which explains, if it does not wholly justify, the description of Nature as a "soulless machine" and "mill of death." It exacts the price which has always to be paid for behavior that is literally without variable-ness or shadow of turning. It is no respecter of persons and has no regard for the exigencies of the day and hour.

Shall burning Etna, if a sage requires,
Forget to thunder and recall her fires?
On air or sea new motions be imprest
O blameless Bethel! to relieve thy
breast?

When the loose mountain trembles
from on high,
Shall gravitation cease if you go by?

The disadvantages of the uniformity of Nature, as Dr. James Ward has recently shown, are exactly parallel to those which arise from the prevalence of habit, custom and law in human society. Without these conservative elements of social life, no true justice, freedom, or progress would be possible; but to these, freedom, justice, and progress are often ruthlessly sacrificed. The strict procedure of a criminal court, for instance, has sent more than one innocent man to his death; the marriage laws, which are the foundation of all social stability and purity, inflict unmerited suffering on many individuals. "The dubious character thus attaching to the conservative factors of the social world," says Dr. Ward, "holds also of the more funda-

mental routine of what we often speak of apart as the physical world. Here, too, in what are called the conservations of mass and energy, we have principles which are at once the indispensable conditions of stable construction, yet always tending to destruction, in so far as they count nothing stable that they can further level down—just as friction again renders locomotion possible and yet steadily retards it." Thus the double-edged character of Nature's constitution is once more disclosed; to the uniformity of law man owes his command over Nature; it is also the source of some of his worst evils.

We are thus brought to our final inquiry; is this ambiguous character of Nature reconcilable with belief in a God who makes all things work together for good?

In the first place, it cannot be affirmed too strongly that our faith is not discredited when discredit falls upon certain arguments and forms of piety which have quite naturally, but quite mistakenly, been associated with it. Now it is indisputable that an impartial scrutiny of Nature and her ways, makes an end of that unequalled reverence for Nature to which religion has often felt itself committed. Science indeed has already destroyed in the minds of all thoughtful men that old, simple-minded natural theology which occasionally lingers in popular thought. As the late Professor William James so eloquently taught, we could never yield our heart's allegiance to any God of whom Nature could be regarded as the full expression. But now all that such natural theology could prove, even if it were successful, would merely be that "man is God's domestic animal." No Christian wishes to prove that conclusion, who has the slightest understanding of his creed; nor would the arguments by which such a conclusion might be sup-

ported be the real grounds of Christian belief.

The literal meaning of the faith that God is love is simply this: our ideals of happiness and beauty, truth and goodness, are sacred to God Himself; somehow, somewhere, He will bring them to fruition.

Now what kind of a world would that be in which ideal and actual would meet? Some glimpses of it may be yielded to the best of us in our highest moments, but to set forth its nature in concrete detail is utterly beyond us. As easily might the caterpillar foretell what its way of life would be, when it had left its creeping body behind it to wing its flight through the limpid air of a summer noon. But one thing is certain. Such a state of perfect being is not coincident with any life which man could attain upon this earth. If one of the aims of Nature be to fit us for such a life, man's mere natural good is not the aim of Nature. To this we shall recur immediately.

In the second place, the faith that the divine end of the universe includes the realization of our highest ideals, does not rest merely on the barest inferences which seem warranted by the data which Nature supplies. Historically, we owe it mainly to the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation and to the inner experiences of religious men, whose primary concern was for moral deliverance and peace. If we approach the question from the philosophic point of view, we must describe it as a postulate which we make in order to give unity to thought and life. In this respect, it is precisely on a par with those other anticipations of Nature to which science itself is driven. It is a commonplace now in philosophy, that all the ideal principles by which we re-mould and control our immediate experience—for instance, the uniformity of law—are demands which the mind makes, and must make, if the

world is to be intelligible. They are not impressed upon us from without. They originate in the purposive intellect which strives to find in the universe the harmonious counterpart of itself. Similarly, the belief that God is love originates in the upward striving heart which aspires after a moral cosmos. There is, of course, this difference: the postulates of science can be verified within the limits of an experience vastly narrower than would suffice to demonstrate the primal postulate of religion. Its full, scientific proof must wait till the kingdom of God be fully come. But as postulates their relation to the facts is identical. If, as is now generally allowed, it is illegitimate to condemn the one for anticipating experience, it is equally illegitimate to condemn the other. Moreover, as Professor James often insisted, there is this additional ground in favor of the religious postulate. It is the all important factor in the creation of the very facts by which it can be verified.

Now I venture to think this meets a famous argument of Hume, an argument which, even when it is not explicitly formulated, is the great barrier to faith in many minds. Hume urged that if we had an independent ground for believing that there is a God who is love, we might allow that the facts which seem to contradict that belief are capable of reconciliation with it, in some way not yet known to us; but, said he, the facts are all we have to go by. On the contrary, I must repeat, we do not go by the mere facts, any more than science itself does when it goes beyond the mere deliverances of immediate experiences. In this respect, Hume's empiricism renders his criticism of the theistic position as defective as his account of the law of causality. In religion, as in science, we assume our postulate because we wish intellectually to transform and practically to change the

facts. We believe in the divine purpose, not merely in virtue of what the world is, but in virtue of what the world is *not*.

Nevertheless, it will be said, you admit that your faith is finally valid only so far as it works; and do not these sinister facts of Nature prove that it does not work?

Experience, it may fairly be said, does not warrant any such blank denial. The advantages of Nature, after all, are immeasurably greater than its disadvantages. The steady gain of man is so far a proof that Nature and its Author favor our ideals. Moreover, on the Christian view, it is not mere natural good, but the enrichment of man in thought and will and feeling, that is the aim of the world process. It is, therefore, the harsher features of Nature, as we have already seen, which prevent material gain from defeating its own purpose. It is likewise a truism that our highest good and happiness is often attained, not by the way of natural good, but through the transcendence of evil and discord. "He that loseth his life shall find it." But are there not physical evils so terrible as to have no soul of good in them which we can see? They may be capable, none the less, of being resolved in a higher harmony. The very greatness of our destiny leaves us still largely in the dark as to its full nature or the detail of its attainment. Here, if anywhere, our position is that of Carlyle's minnow, which knows nothing of the periodic currents and moon's eclipses by which its little native creek is regulated. But even with our limited wisdom, can we say that even our

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worst physical evils have no compensation? Is the heroism which they have inwrought into the spirit of man no gain? The captain and crew of the sinking ship, for example, who stay at their posts till the last boatful has disengaged itself, and then, in Frederick Robertson's language, "go down into the majesty of darkness crushed but not subdued": do they not become forever an informing, uplifting presence in the human heart? So far, then, our conclusion must be this. Our Christian faith that God is love would not lead us to expect Nature to be so very different from what science reveals it to be. We should expect it to be terrible, beautiful, stupendous, but in no sense a cosmos finished and complete; rather a transitory phase in the development of the divine purpose, for the perfection and redemption of immortal spirits. On the whole, this is what Nature seems to be. At its worst, it has been the mighty anvil of the human race, on which man's successive generations are battered "with the shocks of doom to shape and use."

We may, therefore, without confusion of mind or insincerity of heart, embrace the ancient faith, "Even though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." We may believe, though we cannot wholly prove, that, in spite of temporary defeat and disaster, and even the eclipse of death, man is immortal and the path of his destiny is upward. For such faith, while it may transcend reason, is not opposed to reason. It is, in Dr. Schiller's words, "the pillar of flame which points out the path of the soul beyond the limits of unaided sight."

Robert Christie.

TARTARIN: THE FRENCH COMIC GIANT.

It is not every country and every period gives birth to a comic giant. Tragic and sentimental heroes are common, and make upon the history of literature a mark of sorts; we have Achilles and Werther, William Tell and d'Artagnan, Tristan and Sir Galahad, others, too, with equal claims to fame: but comic giants are few. The literature of the world is full of comic pigmies, it is fairly rich in half-grown such as Eulenspiegel, Mr. Dooley and Mr. Pickwick, but it does not easily produce the comic character who stands alone and massive among his fellows, like Balzac among novelists. There are not half a dozen competitors for the position, for Pantagruel and Gargantua are too philosophic, while Don Quixote does not move every reader to laughter; he is too romantic, too noble; he is hardly comic. Baron von Munchausen, Falstaff and Tartarin alone remain face to face, all of them simple, all of them adventurous, but adventurous without literary inflations, as a kitten is adventurous when it explores a work-basket. There is no gigantic quality where there is self-consciousness or cynicism; the slightest strain causes the gigantic to vanish, the creature becomes human. The comic giant must be obvious, he must be, to himself, rebellious to analysis; he must also be obvious to the beholder, but to him quite transparent. This is not a paradox, it is a restatement of the fact that the comic giant's simplicity must be so great that everybody but he will realize it.

All this Tartarin fulfils. He is the creature of Alphonse Daudet, a second-rate writer who has earned for him a title maybe to immortality. There is no doubt that Daudet was a second-rate writer, and that Mr. George Moore was right when he summed him up as *de la*

bouilla-baisse; his novels are sentimental, his reminiscences turgid, his verses suitable for crackers, but Daudet had an asset—his extraordinary feeling for the South. It was not knowledge or observation made Tartarin; it was instinct. Neither in *Tartarin de Tarascon*, nor in *Tartarin sur les Alpes* was Daudet for a moment inconsistent or obscure; for him, Tartarin and his followers stood all the time in violent light. He knew not only what they had to say under given circumstances, but also what they would say under any circumstances that might arise.

It is not wonderful then, that Tartarin appears as a large character. You will figure him throughout as a French bourgeois, aged about forty in the first novel, fifty in the second and sixty in the third. Daudet's dates being unreliable, you must assume his adventures as happening between 1861 and 1881, and bridge the gaps that exist between them with a vision of Tartarin's stormily peaceful life in the sleepy town of Tarascon. For Tartarin was too adventurous to live at all without dangers and storms. When he was not shooting lions in Algeria, or climbing in the Alps, or colonizing in Polynesia, Tartarin was still a hero: he lived in his little white house with the green shutters, surrounded with knives, revolvers, rifles, double-handed swords, crishes and yataghans; he read, not the local paper, but Fenimore Cooper and Captain Cook; he learned how to fight and how to hunt, how to follow a trail, or he hypnotized himself with the recitals of Alpine climbs, of battles in China with the bellicose Tartar. Save under compulsion, he never did anything, partly because there was nothing to do at Tarascon, partly because his soul was turned rather towards

bourgeois comfort than towards glory and blood. This, however, the fiery Southerner could not accept: if he could not do he could pretend, and thus did Daudet establish the enormous absurdity of his character.

There was nothing to shoot at Tarascon, so Tartarin and his followers went solemnly into the fields and fired at their caps; there was nothing to climb, except the neighboring Alpilles . . . whose height was three hundred feet, but Tartarin bought an alpen-stock and printed upon his visiting-cards the initials which meant "President of the Alpine Club"; there was no danger in the town, but Tartarin never went out at night without a dagger and several guns. He was a bourgeois, but he was a romantic: he had to find in fiction the excitement that life refused him, to create it where it did not exist. In the rough, Tartarin was the jovial Frenchman of the South, short, fat, excitable, unable to see things as they are, unable to restrain his voice, his gestures, his imagination; he was greedy and self-deceived, he saw trifles as enormous, he placed the world under a magnifying glass.

It is because of this enormous vision of life that Tartarin was driven into adventure. Because he magnified his words he was compelled by popular opinion to sail for Algiers to shoot lions, though he was at heart afraid of dogs; to scale the Alps, though he shuddered when he thought of catching cold. He had to justify himself in the eyes of his fellow-citizens, or forgo for ever the halo of heroism. He did not have to abandon it, for Daudet loved his Tartarin; in Algeria he was mocked, swindled, beaten, but somehow he found his lion's skin; and, in the Alps, he actually scaled both the Jungfrau and the Mont Blanc . . . the first without knowing that it was dangerous, the second against his will.

Tartarin won because he was vital, his vitality served him as a shield. All his qualities were of those that make a man absurd but invincible; his exaggeration, his histrionics, his mock heroics, his credulity, his mild sensuality, his sentimentality and his bumptious cowardice—all this blended into an enormous bubbling charm which neither man nor circumstance could in the end withstand.

Daudet brought out his traits on every page. Everywhere he made Tartarin strut and swell as a turkey-cock. Exaggeration, in other words lying, was in every word and deed of Tartarin. He could not say: "We were a couple of thousand at the amphitheatre yesterday," but naturally said: "We were fifty thousand." And he was not exactly lying; Daudet, who loved him well, pleaded that this was not lying but mirage, mirage induced by the hot sun. He was not quite wrong: when Tartarin said that he had killed forty lions he believed it; and his fellow-climber believed the absurd story he had concocted: that Switzerland was a fraud, that there were elderdowns at the bottom of every crevasse, and that he had himself climbed the Andes on his hands and knees. Likewise, Tartarin and the people of Tarascon were deceived by their own histrionics. The baobab (*arbores gigantea*) which Tartarin trained in a flower-pot was, in their imagination, a hundred feet high.

Histrionics and mock heroics pervade the three books. It is not the fact that matters, it is the fact seen through the colored Southern mind, and that mind turns at once away from the fact towards the trifles that attend it. Thus costume is everywhere a primary concern. Tartarin cannot land at Algiers to shoot lions unless he be dressed for the part in Arab clothes, and he must carry three rifles, drag behind him a portable camp, a phar-

macy, a patent tent, patent compressed foods. Nothing is too absurd for him: he has a "Winchester rifle with thirty-two cartridges in the magazine"; he does not shrink from "*a rifle with a semicircular barrel for shooting round the corner.*" To climb the Righi (instead of using the funicular) he must wear his jersey, his ice-shoes, his snow goggles. Everywhere he plays a part and plays it in costume. Nor is Tartarin alone in this; the Tarasconnais emulate their chief: Major Bravida dons black when he calls to compel Tartarin "to redeem his honor" and leave for Algiers; when Port Tarascon, the frantic colony, is formed, costumes are designed for grandees, for the militia, for the bureaucrats. Appearances alone matter: Tarascon is not content with the French flag, but spread-eagles across it a fantastic local animal, *La Tarasque*, of mythical origin.

Life in Tarascon is too easy: Tartarin helps it on with a war-whoop. He creates adventure. Thus in 1870 he organizes against the Germans the defence of the town; mines are laid under the market-place, the *Café de la Comédie* is turned into a redoubt, volunteers drill in the street. Of course there is no fighting, the Germans do not come, nor do the prudent Tarasconnais attempt to seek them out, but in its imagination the town has been heroic. It is heroic again when it defends against the government the monks of Pampérigouste: the convent becomes a fortress but there is no fighting; when the supplies give out the heroic defenders march out with their weapons and their banners, in their crusaders' uniforms. The town believes. It believes anything and anybody. Because a rogue calls himself a prince, Tartarin entrusts him with his money and is deserted in the Sahara; because another calls himself a duke, thousands of Tarasconnais follow Tartarin to a non-existent colony bought by them

from the pseudo-duke. Whether the matter be general or personal Tartarin believes. He falls in love with a Moorish girl, and innocently allows himself to be persuaded that a substitute is the beauty whom he beheld through the yashmak.

Tartarin believes because he is together romantic, sentimental and mildly sensual; that which he likes he wants to think true. He wants to believe that sweet Bala is his true love; when again he succumbs to Sonia, the Russian exile, he wants to believe that he too is an extremist, a potential martyr in the cause of Nihilism; and again he wants to believe that Likiriki, the nigger girl, is the little creature of charm for whom his heart has been calling. His sentimentality is always ready—for women, for ideas, for beasts. He can be moved when he hears for the hundredth time the ridiculous ballads that are popular in the local drawing-rooms, weep when Bézouquet, the chemist, sings "Oh thou, beloved white star of my soul!" For him the lion is "a noble beast," who must be shot, not caged; the horse "the most glorious conquest of man." He is always above the world, never of it unless his own safely be endangered, when he scuttles to shelter; as Daudet says, half Tartarin is Quixote, half is Sancho . . . but Sancho wins. It is because Tartarin is a comic coward that he will not allow the heroic crusaders of Pampérigouste to fire on the government troops; the "abbot" of Port Tarascon to train the carronade on the English frigate; alone, he is a greater coward than in public; he shivers under his weapons when he walks to the club in the evening; he severs the rope on Mont Blanc, sending his companion to probable death. But the burlesque does not end tragically: nobody actually dies, all return to Tarascon in time to hear their funeral orations.

It might be thought that Tartarin is

repulsive; he is not, he is too young, too innocent. His great, foolish heart is too open to the woes of any damsel; his simplicity, his credulity, his muddled faith, the optimism which no misfortune can shatter—all these traits endear him to us, make him real. For Tartarin is real: he is the Frenchman of the South; in the words of a character, "The Tarasconnais type is the Frenchman magnified, exaggerated, as seen in a convex mirror." Tartarin and his fellows typify the South, though some typify one side of the Southern Frenchman rather than another; thus Bravida is military pride, Excourbanis mere noise, Bataillet pugnacity. Likewise Bompard is the liar, and mild Pascalon is the imitator of imitators: when Tarascon, arrested by the British captain and brought home on board the frigate, takes up the attitude of Napoleon on the *Bellerophon*, Pascalon begins a memorial and tries to impersonate Las Cases. As for Tartarin, bellwether of the flock, he has all the characteristics, he even sings all the songs. He is the South.

The three Tartarin books constitute together the most violent satire that has ever been written against the South. Gascony, Provence and Languedoc are often made the butts of Northern French writers, while Lombards introduce in books ridiculous Neapolitans, and Catalonians paint burlesque Andalusians, but no writer has equalled Alphonse Daudet in consistent ferocity. So evident is this, that Tarascon to this day resents the publications and that, some years ago, a commercial traveller who humorously signed himself on the hotel register as "Alphonse Daudet" was mobbed in the street, and rescued by the police from the rabble who threatened to throw him into the Rhône. Tarascon, a little junction on the way to Marseilles, has been made absurd for ever. Yet, though Daudet exaggerated, he built

on the truth: there is a very close connection between his preposterous figures, grown men with the tendencies of children enormously distorted, and the Frenchmen of the South. Indeed, the Southern Frenchman is the Frenchman as we picture him in England; there is between him and his compatriot from Picardy or Flanders a difference as great as exists between the Scotsman and the man of Kent. The Northern Frenchman is sober, silent, hard, reasonable and logical; his imagination is negligible, his artistic taste as corrupt as that of an average inhabitant of the Midlands. But the Southern Frenchman is a different creature; his excitable temperament, his irresponsibility and impetuosity run through the majority of French artists and politicians. As the French saying goes, "the South moves"; thus it is not wonderful that Le Havre and Lille should not rival Marseilles and Bordeaux.

Tartarin lives to a greater or lesser degree within every Frenchman of the plains, born South of the line which unites Lyons and Bordeaux. It is Tartarin who stands for hours at street corners in Arles or Montpellier, chattering with Tartarin and, like Tartarin, endlessly brags of the small birds he has killed, of the hearts he has won and of his extraordinary luck at cards. It is Tartarin again who still wears night-caps and flannel belts, and drinks every morning great bowls of chocolate. And it is Tartarin who, light-heartedly, joins the colonial infantry regiment and goes singing into battle because he likes the adventure and would rather die in the field than be bored in barracks. Daudet has maligned the South so far as courage is concerned: there is nothing to show that the Southerners, Tarasconnais and others, are any more cowardly than the men of the North. Courage goes in zones, and because the Italians have

always proved bad troops the South must not be indicted *en bloc*. Presumably Daudet felt compelled to make Tartarin a poltroon so as to throw into relief his braggadocio; that is a flaw in his work, but if it be accepted as the license of a *littérateur*, it does not mar the picture of Tartarin.

It should not, therefore, be lost sight of by the reader of *Tartarin de Tarascon* and of *Tartarin Sur Les Alpes* that this is caricature. Every line is true, but modified a little by the "mirage" that Alphonse Daudet so deftly satirizes: it is only so much distorted as irony demands. *Tartarin de Tarascon* is by far the greatest of the three books; it is the most compact, and within its hundred-odd pages the picture of Tartarin is completely painted; the sequel appears to be merely the response of the author to the demand of a public who so loved Tartarin as to buy five hundred thousand copies of his adventures. As for *Port Tarascon*, the

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beginning of Tartarin's end, it should not have been written, for it closes on a new Tartarin who no longer believes in his own triumphs—a sober, disillusioned Tartarin, shorn of his glory, flouted by his compatriots and ready to die in a foreign town. Alphonse Daudet had probably tired of his hero, for he understood him no longer. The real Tartarin could not be depressed by misadventure, chastened by loss of prestige: to cast him to earth could only bring about once more the prodigy of Anteus. He would have risen again, more optimistic and bombastic than ever, certain that no enemy had thrown him and that he had but slipped. And if Tartarin had to die, which is not certain, for Tartarin's essence is immortal, he could not die disgraced, but must die sumptuously—like Cleopatra among her jewels, or a Tartar chief standing on his piled arms on the crest of a funeral pyre.

W. L. George.

SNATTY.

"This 'appened in a battle to a batt'ry of the corps
Which is first among the women an' amazin' first in war."
—KIPLING.

I.

Driver Joseph Snatt, K3 Battery, R.H.A., slouched across the barrack-square on his way to the stables. Having just received a severe punishment for the heinous crime of ill-treating a horse, in spite of his plausible excuse that he had been bitten and had lost his temper, Snatty, as he was always called, felt much aggrieved.

"'Orses," he thought to himself, "is everything in this 'ere bloomin' batt'ry—men's nothing."

Nor, in his own particular case, was he far wrong. For the horses of K3 were certainly quite wonderful, and Snatty was undoubtedly a "waster." His death or his desertion would have

been a small matter compared with the spoiling of one equine temper.

The officers disliked him because he was an eyesore to them; the N.C.O.'s hated him because he gave them endless trouble; and the men had shown their distrust of his personal cleanliness by ducking him in a horse-trough more than once. Driver Snatt felt that every man's hand was against him, and since he possessed neither the will power nor the desire to overcome his delinquencies by a little honest toil, he not infrequently drowned his sorrows in large potations of canteen beer. In person he was small and rather shrivelled looking—old for his age unquestionably. A nervous manner and

a slight stammer in the presence of his superiors, combined with a shifty eye at all times, served to enhance the unpleasing effect which he produced on all who knew him. There was but one thing to be said for him—he could ride. Before enlisting he had been in a training stable, but had been dismissed for drink or worse. On foot he lounged about with rounded shoulders and uneven steps, always untidy and often dirty. But once upon a horse, the puny, awkward figure that was the despair of N.C.O.'s and officers alike, became graceful, supple, almost beautiful. The firm, easy seat that swayed to every motion, the hands that coaxed even the hard-mouthed gun-horses into going kindly, betrayed the horseman born. Snatty might kick his horses in the stomach; he would never jerk them in the mouth.

At the conclusion of the midday stable-hour Snatt was summoned before his section officer, one Briddlington by name, more frequently known as "Biddle," and thus addressed—

"Now, look here: you've made a dam' poor show so far, and this is your last chance. If you don't take it, God help you, for I won't. See?"

Snatt stared at his boot, swallowed twice, and then fixed his gaze on some distant point above the opposite stable.

"Ye-es, sir," he said huskily.

"Very well. Now you've never had a job of your own, and I'm going to try you with one. You'll take over the wheel of A sub-section gun team to-day, and have those two remounts to drive. I shall give you a fortnight's trial. If I see you're trying, I'll do all I can for you. Otherwise—out you go. Understand that?"

Again the deep interest in the distant point, but this time there was a trace of surprise in the faintly uttered "Yes, sir."

Snatty saluted and retired, wonder-

ing greatly. The wheel-driver of a gun team is an important personage: he occupies a coveted position attained only by those who combine skill, nerve, and horsemanship with the ability to tend a pair of horses as they would their own children, and to clean a double set of harness better than their fellows. Snatty at first was resentful: "'E's put me there to make a fool of me, I s'pose. All right, I'll show 'im up. I can drive as well as any of them." Then he experienced a feeling of pleasurable anticipation. As it so happened he detested the driver whose place he was to take, and he looked forward with satisfaction to witnessing the fury of that worthy when ordered to "hand over" to the despised waster of the battery. He was not grateful—that was not his nature—nor was he proud of having been selected. He was on the defensive, determined to show that, given a definite position with duties and responsibilities of his own, he could do very well—if he chose. Which was precisely the frame of mind into which his thoughtful subaltern had hoped to lure him.

In the barrack-room Snatty met with much abuse. In a battery which prides itself enormously on its horses, any ill-treatment of them is not left unnoticed. Barrack-room invective does not take the form of delicate sarcasm: on the contrary, it is coarse and directly to the point. The culprit sat upon his bed-cot and sulked in silence, until a carrot-headed driver sitting on the table with his hat on the back of his head remarked—

"I see ole Biddle givin' you a proper chokin' off after stables."

The chance for which Snatty had waited very patiently had come, and he retorted quickly—

"Oh! did yer? Well, p'raps you'll be glad to 'ear that 'e 'as given me your 'orses and the wheel of A sub.,

says you're no—'use, 'e does!"

Howls of derision greeted this sally, and Snatty relapsed into silence. But that evening, he whistled softly to himself as he led his new horses out to water and watched his red-headed enemy, deprived of his legitimate occupation, put to the unpleasant task of "mucking out" the stable. The day, so Snatty felt, had not been wasted.

II.

From that time dated the conversion of Driver Joseph Snatt. The change was necessarily gradual, for no man can reform in a week: the habits inculcated by years of idleness cannot be cast aside in a moment, nor can the doubts and suspicions clinging to an untrustworthy character be dispersed by one day's genuine work. But still a change for the better was evident. The comments of the barrack-room were free but not unfriendly, for Snatty was beginning to find his true level after his own peculiar fashion. Briddlington, too, did not fail to notice the success of his experiment. Whilst inclined to boast of it in a laughing way to his brother officers, he had the good sense to overlook many trivial offences and to make much of anything that he could find to praise. What pleased him most of all was Snatty's behavior to his horses. Dirty he still was upon occasions, and scarcely as smart as most drivers of the battery; nor was he always quite devoid of drink, but to his horses from that first day onwards he became a devoted faithful slave. They were a pair of which any man might well have been proud. Both were bright bays, well matched in color and in size. In shape they were almost the ideal stamp of artillery wheeler, which is tantamount to saying that they might have graced the stud of any hunting gentleman of fifteen stone or thereabouts. Snatty's pride in them was almost ludicrous. A word

said against them would put him up in arms at once, and when Territorials borrowed the battery horses for their training on Saturday afternoons his indignation knew no bounds.

"'Ow can I keep me 'orses fit," he used to say, "if a bloomin' bank clerk goes drivin' 'em at a stretched gallop the 'ole o' Saturday? Proper dis-'eartenin', that's wot it is." And this in spite of the fact that he was allowed a shilling for his trouble. The villainies that he perpetrated for their well-being, if discovered, would have given him small chance before a stern commanding officer. He stole oats from the forage barn, bread and sugar from his barrack-room, and even the feeds from the next manger. Snatty's moral sense, as we have seen, was not a very high one. But pricked ears and gentle whinnies as he approached, and velvety muzzles pushed into his roughened hand, betrayed the effect of many a purloined dainty, and amply compensated for any qualms which a guilty but belated conscience may have given him. Not that he was particularly caressing in his manner. He would growl at each one as he groomed him, or scold him as one does a naughty child, and his "Naow then, stand still will yer, Dawn," was well known during stable hour. Who it was who had first called the off horse Dawn was never quite clear, but Snatty in a fit of poetic inspiration had christened the other Daylight. Dawn was difficult to shoe, so difficult indeed that his driver's presence was required in the forge to keep him still. And when Snatty went on furlough for a month both horses began to lose condition.

The years went by and Snatty soldiered on, winter and summer, drill season and leave season, content to drive the wheel of A and drink a bit too much on Saturdays. But in that time he had become a man—not a

strong, determined man, certainly not a refined one, but for all that a man. To Briddlington, who had raised him from the mental slough in which he had lain to all appearances content, he at no time betrayed a sense of gratitude. On the contrary, the position of a privileged person of some standing which he had gained he attributed largely to his own cunning in decelving his superiors combined with his consummate skill with horses. But still he had learnt his job, and was fulfilling his destiny to more purpose than many better men. Moreover he was happy. Crooning softly as he polished straps and buckles in the harness-room, with a skill and speed born of long practice, he was contented, and was vaguely conscious that the world was not a bad place after all. An officer who knew him well once said—

"I wouldn't trust him to carry a bottle of whisky half a mile, but I'd send him across England with a pair of horses—by himself. And as to driving—well, I don't know about the needle and the camel's eye, but I know that Snatty would drive blind drunk along the narrow road to Heaven and never let his axles touch!" For two years in succession the battery won the galloping competition at Olympia, with Snatty in the wheel. And over rough ground, moving fast, he was unequalled.

When his time was up and Snatty had to go, there was never, perhaps, a time-expired man who was so hard put to it to assume a joy at leaving which he did not feel. Of course, like other men, he swaggered about saying that he was glad to be "shut off" the army; that he had got a nice little place to step into where there wasn't any "Do this" and "Do that" and "Why the deuce haven't you done what I told you?" But in his heart he was more affected than he had ever been before.

"Wot about yer 'orses, Snatty?" some one asked him; "who's going to 'ave them when you're gorn?"

"'Ow should I know?" he answered, rather nettled.

"Nobbler Parsons, so I 'eard. 'E'll soon spoil 'em, I bet yer."

Then was Snatty very wroth, and he replied—

"You leave me and my 'orses alone, or you'll be in for it, I warn yer," thereby revealing his inmost feelings most effectually.

On the eve of his departure he was treated by his friends till he grew almost maudlin. Then he slipped away "just to say good-bye to 'em," and even that hardened assembly of "canteen regulars" forbore to scoff. He was found when the battery came down to evening stables, a pathetic figure, in his ill-fitting suit of plain clothes, standing between his beloved pair, an arm round the neck of one, his pockets full of sugar, and tears of drink and genuine grief trickling down his unwashed cheeks.

"Six bloomin' years I've 'ad yer," they heard him say. "Six bloomin' years, and no one's ever said a word against yer that I 'aven't knocked the 'ead off. P'rades and manœuvres, practice camp and ceremonial, there's nothin' I can't do wiv yer and . . . and, Gawd, I wish I wasn't leavin' yer now to some other bloke." Then they led him gently away, and on the morrow he was gone. For a week he was missed; in a month he was forgotten. Only Daylight and Dawn still fretted for him, and turned round in their stalls with anxious, wistful eyes.

For six months Snatty struggled to keep body and soul together, living upon his reserve pay and upon such small sums as he could pick up by doing odd jobs in livery stables. But the self-respect which he had won so hardly slipped away from him, and he sank slowly in the social scale. The

lot of the ex-soldier whose character is "fair," and whose record of sobriety leaves much to be desired, is not a happy one. Snatty was in rags and well-nigh starving. Small wonder, then, that one day the blandishments of an eloquent recruiting sergeant proved too much for his resistance, and that he succumbed to the temptations thrust upon him by the great god Hunger. Manfully he perjured himself when brought before the magistrate. His name was Henry Morgan, his age twenty-three years and five months, and he had never served before, so help him God. All false—but Snatty wished to live.

He asked to be put into the infantry, fearing that his knowledge of the ways of troop stables would betray him if he joined a mounted branch. The penalties attached to a "false answer on attestation" were heavy, as he knew, and he would take no chances. In due course, therefore, he found himself posted to a crack light infantry regiment, and his troubles soon began. To be marched about a barrack-square followed by shouts of objurgation was bad enough: to be pestered with the intricacies of musketry was worse: but what galled him most of all was to have to walk. He loathed the life. This was not the world of soldiering that he had known and loved. His soul hungered for the rattle of log-chains and the jingle of harness; the smell of the stable lingered in his nostrils. Moreover, he was in constant trouble, for desperation made him reckless. Those who had known him in the battery would scarcely have recognized in the sullen ne'er-do-well whom men called Morgan, the cheerful Snatty of a former time. He had just passed his recruit drills (with difficulty be it said) and taken his place in the ranks, when the war which wise men had predicted as inevitable was forced upon the nation with disconcerting sudden-

ness. The regiment was ordered out on service, and with it, amongst nine hundred other souls, went Private Henry Morgan, *alias* Snatty.

III.

A hot sun beating down from a cloudless sky upon a land parched and dusty from a lengthened drought; miles upon miles of rolling downs, which once were green but which the driest summer for many years has baked into a dirty yellow; here and there an oasis consisting of a copse of fir-trees, a farmstead, and a field or two of pasture marking the presence of a kindly stream: a landscape in short so typical of hundreds of square miles of this particular region that ordinarily it would fail to interest. But to-day the peace of the country side is disturbed by the boom of guns and the rattle of musketry. Two mighty armies are at grips at last, and in the space between them hovers Death.

Upon a little rise commanding a good view of the surrounding country there is a long line of khaki figures lying prone behind a scanty earthwork. These are infantry, and shaken infantry at that; shaken because they have marched all night and stormed that hill at dawn with fearful loss, because they are weak from hunger and parched with thirst, and because they feel in their hearts that the end is near. Relief must come, or one determined rush will drive them back to ruin. Shells burst over them with whip-like crack, rifle fire tears through their ranks, and sometimes a harsh scream followed by a deafening report and clouds of acrid smoke marks the advent of a high-explosive shell.

A much harassed brigadier sat behind a rock near the telephone awaiting the answer to his urgent demand for guns. It came sooner than he expected it, and took the tangible shape of a little group of horsemen which ap-

peared on the hill some way to his right. There was a quick consultation as glasses swept the front. Then the horses were led away under cover and the range-takers began operations. The brigadier recognized the signs and gained fresh hope as he saw that his prayer was answered. At the far end of the line Private Morgan, busily engaged in excavating a hole for himself by means of an entrenching tool much resembling a short-handled garden hoe, looked up quickly as he heard a well-known voice say—

"All right, Biddie, I'll observe from here. Bring 'em in quick."

"Strewth!" muttered Snatty to himself, "it's the major. So the old troop's comin' into action 'ere."

For weeks he had scanned every battery that had been near him, hoping to meet his own. But Horse Artillery act with cavalry and work far ahead of the toiling infantry in rear, so that it was not till now, when a pitched battle was in progress, when the advanced cavalry had come in and every available gun was being utilized, that Fate permitted Snatty to see his old battery once more. Looking over his shoulder he said—

"It's all right now, sergeant. There's some guns coming."

"You shut yer mouth and get on with yer work," was the rejoinder, "Wot do you know about guns, I'd like to know?"

"Oh, nothink! But you watch 'em, that's all," said Private Morgan with an ill-suppressed gleam of pride, which made the sergeant wonder.

The line of six guns, each with its wagon behind it, thundered up the rise. There was a shrill whistle, and a hand held up. Then the hoarse voices of the sergeants shouted, "Action front," and the wheelers were thrown into the breeching, almost sitting on their haunches to stop the weight behind them: the gunners leapt from

their horses and sprang to the gun: a second's pause, then "Drive on," and six limbers went rattling away to the rear as six trails were flung round half a circle and dropped with a thud. Hardly were they down before each gun had its wagon up beside it, and the horses unhooked. They too galloped to the rear. In ten seconds there was not a sign of movement. The battery was there, and that was all.

Of the weary infantry who lay and watched there was one at least who could appreciate the merit of the performance.

"Couldn't ha' been better in the old days on Salisbury Plain," was his comment. "But, Gawd! the 'orses 'ave fell away proper. Skeletons, that's wot they are now."

But Private Morgan's soliloquy was again cut short by the remorseless sergeant behind him.

A few curt orders passed rapidly down the battery, then came two sharp reports, followed by the click of the re-opened breech, as the ranging rounds went singing on their journey. A spurt of brown earth showed for a second in front of that thick black line a mile or more away, another showed behind.

"Graze short—graze over," said the major, still staring through his glasses. "Eighteen hundred, one round gun fire."

The order was repeated by a man standing behind him with a megaphone, and followed almost instantaneously by a round from every gun. Some puffs of smoke above the target, the echo of the bursting shell borne back along the breeze, and then for perhaps a minute all Hell might have been let loose, such was the uproar as every gun was worked at lightning speed. A whistle—and in a moment all was still again.

"Target down—stop firing," was the laconic order. "But," added the ma-

for softly, "I think that sickened 'em a bit."

The attacking infantry had dropped down under cover, but not for long. Nearer and nearer pressed the relentless lines, sometimes pausing a while, or even dropping back, but always, like the waves of the incoming tide, gaining fresh ground at every rush. The end was very near now, and the bitterness of defeat entered into the defenders' hearts. For they did not know that the struggle for this particular hill, though of vital importance to themselves, was merely serving the subsidiary purpose of diverting attention while greater issues matured elsewhere. They only knew that ammunition was scarce, that they wanted water, and that now at last the order to retire had come. They got away in dribblets, slowly, very slowly, until at last nothing was left upon the hillside but a handful of infantry, the battery, and the dead and wounded. The riflemen crawled closer to the guns, feeling somehow that there was solace in their steady booming. The major looked at his watch, and then at the attacking lines in front of him.

"In ten minutes we'll have to get out of this," he said, "bring the horses up close behind us under cover." The minutes passed and the net around them drew closer.

"Prepare to retire—rear limber up."

The few remaining infantry emptied their magazines and crept off down the hill. The guns fired their last few rounds as the teams came jingling up. Their arrival was the signal for a fresh outburst of fire. The few moments required for limbering up seemed a lifetime as men fell fast and horses mad with terror broke loose and dashed away. But years of stern discipline and careful training stood the battery in good stead now. The principle of "Abandon be damned: we never abandon guns" was not forgotten.

Through the shouting, the curses, and the dust, the work went on. Dead horses were cut free and pulled aside, gunners took the place of fallen drivers, and at last five guns were got away. The sixth was in great difficulties. The maddened horses backed in every direction but the right one, and the panting gunners strove in vain to drop the trail upon the limber-hook. Beside the team stood Briddlington, trying to soothe the horses and steadying the men in the calm, cool voice that he habitually used upon parade.

Then suddenly from behind a rock there crawled out a strange figure. Filthy beyond words, hatless, with an inch of scrubby beard, and one foot bound up in blood-stained rag, this apparition limped painfully towards the gun—

"Naow then!" a husky voice exclaimed, "stand still will yer, Dawn."

"By Jove! it's Snatty," cried Briddlington, and as he spoke the driver of Snatty's horses gave a little grunt and pitched off on to the ground. Without a word the erstwhile private of infantry stooped and took the whip from the dead man's hand. He patted each horse in turn, then climbed into the saddle.

"Steady now—get back will yer," he growled, and they obeyed him quietly enough. The men behind gave a heave at the gun and a click denoted that the trail was on its hook.

"Drive on," cried Snatty, flourishing his whip, and down the hill they went full gallop.

Safety lay not in the way that they had come, but further to their left, where the ground was bad. At the bottom of the hill there was a low bank with a ditch in front of it, and just before they reached it the centre driver received a bullet in the head and dropped down like a stone. There was no time to pull up. The lead driver took his horses hard by the head

and put them at the bank. They jumped all right, but the pair behind them, deprived of a guiding hand upon the reins, saw the ditch at the last moment and swerved.

"My Gawd!" said Snatty, sitting back for the crash he knew would follow. The traces and the pace had dragged the centre horses over in spite of their swerve, but one of them stumbled as he landed. He staggered forward, and before he could recover Snatty's horses and the gun were upon him in a whirling mass of legs and straps and wheels. Briddlington, who had been riding beside the team, leapt to the ground and ran to the fallen horses.

"Sit on their heads," he cried. "Undo the quick release your side. Now then, together—heave." There was a rattle of hoofs against the footboard as Daylight rolled over kicking wildly to get free. Briddlington, at the risk of his life, leant over and pulled frantically at a strap. The two ends flew apart and the snorting horses struggled to their feet, but Snatty lay very still and deathly white upon the ground.

"Don't stand gaping. Hook in again—quick. We're not clear away yet by a long chalk," said Briddlington. Then he bent down and putting his arms round Snatty's crumpled figure

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lifted him very tenderly aside. "Lie still now," he said with a catch in his voice as he saw that the case was hopeless, "and you'll be all right." But those flashing hoofs and steel-tyred wheels had done their work. Snatty's last drive was over.

"It warn't their fault. I should 'ave 'eld them up," was all he said before he died.

The gun rejoined the battery safely, and defeat was turned to victory ere nightfall, but Private Henry Morgan was returned as "missing" from his regiment.

IV.

To this day, on the anniversary of the battle, in the mess of K3 Battery, R.H.A., it is the custom, when the King's health has been drunk, for the President to say—

"Mr. Vice, to the memory of the man who brought away the last gun." And the Vice-president answers: "Gentlemen, to Driver Snatt."

Then the curious visitor is shown a large oil painting of a pair of bright bay horses with a little wizened driver riding one of them.

"That's Snatty," they will say, "a drunken scoundrel if you like, but he loved those horses, and he used to drive like blazes."

Jeffery E. Jeffery.

"MINE EYES TO THE HILLS."

Old David the Psalmist he laid down the cup,

The wine ceased to gladden, the harps had lost tune,
And he went to his casement, I think, and looked up

Where the hills of the Phillistines fronted the moon,
And he thought of old days—and a sling that he took
And of five smooth white pebbles he'd picked from a brook!

And his eye lighted up as he looked at his hills,

The hills of old triumphs, and high-riding stars,
When he watched by the rush of the snow-watered rills
Where the wild asses drank and lay down on the scars,

In the days when he'd hunted and followed his flocks
Where the little gray conies ran over the rocks!

And his spirit was caught in the magical calm
Of far rugged faces, of scarps and of screes,
For a day on a hill-side will lend you a balm
That begins with bell-heather and murmur of bees,
And ends with the mantle of silence that drops
'Twixt man and his troubles on reaching the Tops!

So now, when the nights have grown warm with July
(And London in summer's as bad as Bombay),
Our town-sickened hearts through the windows will fly
To Teviot and Tayside, Balquidder and Spey,
To loch and to river, to corrie and strath,
Where we also have met with Goliaths of Gath!

Oh, giants we've countered—trout, salmon or stag—
We dream of you now and of battles we've fought
By bare windy brae-face, by peat-pool and hag,
Where, if you've escaped us, you're still to be sought;
But it matters no whit how the combat has gone,
Since the hills in their bigness and peace have looked on!

Then we fashion—for Fancy plays wonderful freaks—
The sough of a pine-wood, the scent of a brae,
With, massed far above us, crags, saddles and peaks,
Where great caller winds blow the cobwebs away,
And roar in the gulleys, and whoop down the cuts,
And bring the wild grouse-packs like smoke to the butts!

By leagues of red heather and murderous midge,
By crisp Autumn duskings a-bellow with deer,
By straight-driven coveys, by rigging and ridge—
It's mountains for us now that August is near;
For London's got every sublunary ill,
And our hearts—like old David's—are fain for "the hill"!

ON REST.

Rest is not the conclusion of labor but the recreation of power. It seems a reward because it fulfils a need: but that need being filled rest is but an extinction and a nothingness. So we do not pray for rest; but, in a just religion, we pray after this life for refreshment, light and peace.

Rest is only for a little while, as also is labor only for a little while: each demanding the other as a supplement; yet is rest in some intervals a necessary

ground for seed, and without rest to protect the sprouting of the seed no good thing ever grew.

Of many follies in a commonwealth concerning rest the chief is that rest is not needed for all effort therein. Thus one man at leisure will obtain work of another for many days without a sufficiency of rest for him and thinking to profit by this. But if he does profit singly it is like one eating his own flesh, since the withdrawal of rest from those that labor will soon eat up the commonwealth itself.

Much that men do with most particularity is for the establishment of rest. Wise men have often ordered gardens for this purpose only. Beds also are devised best when they give the deepest interval of repose and are surrounded by artifice with prolonged silence, and curtained from light. It is so with rooms removed from the other rooms of a house, and with days set apart from labor and with certain kinds of companionship.

Undoubtedly the regimen of rest is for men that of sleep, and sleep is a sort of medicine to rest and again a true expression of it. For though these two, Rest and Sleep, are not the same, yet without sleep no man can think of rest nor has rest any one better body or way of being than this thing sleep. For in sleep a man utterly sinks down, in proportion as it is deep and good, into the centre of things and becomes one with that from which he came, drawing strength not only by negation from repose, but in some way positive from the being of his mother which is the earth. Some say that sleep is better near against the ground on this account, and all men know that sleep in wild places and without cover is the surest and the best. Sleep promises waking as rest does a renewal of power, and the good dreams that come to us in sleep are a proof that in sleep we are still living.

A man may deny himself any voluptuousness but rest. He may forego wine or flesh or anything of the body, and music or disputation, or anything of the mind, or love itself, or even companionship, but not rest, for if he would deny himself this he wastes himself and is himself no longer. Rest, therefore, is a necessary intermittent which we must have both for soul and body, and is the only necessity inherent to both those two, so long as those two are bound together in the matter and net of this world. For food is a necessity to the body and virtue to the soul, but rest and the same rest to one and to the other.

There is no picture of delight in which we envy other men so much as when lacking rest we see them possessing it; on which occasions we call out unwisely for a perpetual rest and the cessation of all endeavor. In the same way men that devise a lack of rest devise a great torment and none can long survive it.

Rest and innocence make good fellows, for rest is easier to the innocent man, and the wicked suffer unrest in some sort always on account of God's presence warning them, though this unrest is stronger and much more to their good if men also warn them and if they live among such fellows in their commonwealth as will not permit their wickedness to be hidden or to go unpunished.

Rest has no time and, in its perfection, must lose all mark of time. So a man sleeping deeply knows not how many hours have passed since he fell asleep until he awake again.

There are many good accompaniments for rest, slow and distant music which at last is stiller and then silent, the scent of certain herbs and flowers and particularly of roses, clean linen, a pure clear air and the coming of night. To all these things prayer, an honorable profession and a preparation of the

mind are in general a great aid, and in the heat of the season cool water refreshed with essences. A man also should make his toilet for rest if he would have it full and thorough and prepare his body as his soul for a relaxation. He does well also in the last passage of his mind into sleep to commend himself to the care of God, remembering both how petty are all hu-

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man vexations and also how weathercock they are, turning now a face of terror and then in a moment another face of laughter or of insignificance. Many troubles that seem giants at evening are but dwarfs at sunrise, and some most terrific prove ghosts which speed off with the broadening of the day.

H. Belloc.

THE FORLORN HOPE OF HUMANITY.

The words at the head of this article might have seemed a gloomy title for Lord Rosebery to apply to the medical profession in his address to the students of the London Hospital had he not expressly and handsomely explained the conditions of the application. Doctors are the forlorn hope of humanity because they are always carrying on a struggle which can have but one termination. They may fight a gallant delaying action, but the angel of death must be the victor in the end. Yet doctors never despair in the practice of their profession, and always seek new strength and knowledge from their adversities. Antæus-like, they rise reinvigorated every time they touch earth. In fact, in Lord Rosebery's opinion, the medical profession is "the noblest secular profession in the world." We think so, too. But for that matter we suppose that every one would agree with him to the extent of taking the industry and self-sacrifice of doctors to be axioms of our social life. Lord Rosebery remarked that people of his own generation knew very little about medical students, and what they did know was all wrong. His generation had grown to manhood under the impression that all medical students were like Mr. Bob Sawyer and Mr. Benjamin Allen—"dirty, drunken, and unscrupulous," "the vilest speci-

mens of the human race that even fiction represented." Lord Rosebery forgot, no doubt, that his generation includes men whose knowledge of medical students in the middle of last century was not purely literary. The medical student of Dickens's day was certainly not of the type of Bob Sawyer, though there may have been Sawyers in existence. To-day, at all events, the typical medical student, so far from being dirty, drunken, and unscrupulous, is clean, sober, and scrupulous. He does not need to drink in order to enjoy himself. He can make enough row for his pleasure without that. A nervous old lady who beheld the future oracles of Harley Street returning vociferously in fancy dress from an inter-hospital football match on the tops of motor omnibuses might have qualms as to the seriousness of the profession, but she would be wrong. Bob Sawyer would not have been interested enough in football to make a noise over it. Indeed, he could not have played it at all, any more than he could have swum (as Lord Rosebery remarked) a mile in "record" time, as Mr. Morris, one of the students at the London Hospital, did lately.

There have been vast changes in the habits, both professional and social, of doctors, and they did not, of course, suffer in dimension from Lord Rose-

bery's device of taking his standards from Dickens and Thackeray. As he said, except in a few rural districts, the old-fashioned doctor who compounded his own medicines no longer exists. Such a doctor called himself an apothecary, which, as a word, is more interesting than the modern title of "general practitioner," and strictly understood is not less dignified. There is an account of the rise of a small apothecary to fashion and eminence in Thackeray's description of Pendennis's father:—

Early in the Regency of George the Magnificent there lived in a small town in the West of England, called Clavering, a gentleman whose name was Pendennis. There were those alive who remembered having seen his name painted on a board, which was surmounted by a gilt pestle and mortar over the door of a very humble little shop, in the city of Bath, where Mr. Pendennis exercised the profession of apothecary and surgeon; and where he not only attended gentlemen in their sick-rooms, and ladies at the most interesting periods of their lives, but would condescend to sell a brown-paper plaster to a farmer's wife across the counter—or to vend tooth-brushes, hair-powder, and London perfumery. For these facts a few folks at Clavering could vouch, where people's memories were more tenacious, perhaps, than they are in a great bustling metropolis.

And yet that little apothecary who sold a stray customer a pennyworth of salts, or a more fragrant cake of Windsor soap, was a gentleman of good education, and of as old a family as any in the whole county of Somerset. He had a Cornish pedigree which carried the Pendennises up to the time of the Druids—and who knows how much farther back? They had intermarried with the Normans at a very late period of their family existence, and they were related to all the great families of Wales and Brittany. Pendennis had had a piece of University education, too, and might have pursued that career with great honor, but that in his second

year at Cambridge his father died insolvent, and poor Pen was obliged to betake himself to the pestle and apron. He always detested the trade, and it was only necessity and the offer of his mother's brother, a London apothecary of low family, into which Pendennis's father had demeaned himself by marrying, that forced John Pendennis into so odious a calling.

He quickly after his apprenticeship parted from the coarse-minded practitioner his relative, and set up for himself at Bath with his modest medical ensign. He had for some time a hard struggle with poverty; and it was all he could do to keep the shop and its gilt ornaments in decent repair, and his bed-ridden mother in comfort; but Lady Ribstone happening to be passing to the Rooms with an intoxicated Irish chair-man who bumped her ladyship up against Pen's very door-post, and drove his chair-pole through the handsomest pink bottle in the surgeon's window, alighted screaming from her vehicle, and was accommodated with a chair in Mr. Pendennis's shop, where she was brought round with cinnamon and salvolatile.

Mr. Pendennis's manners were so uncommonly gentlemanlike and soothing that her ladyship, the wife of Sir Pepin Ribstone, of Codlingbury, in the county of Somerset, Bart., appointed her preserver, as she called him, apothecary to her person and family, which was very large. Master Ribstone, coming home for the Christmas holidays from Eton, over-ate himself and had a fever, in which Mr. Pendennis treated him with the greatest skill and tenderness. In a word, he got the good graces of the Codlingbury family, and from that day began to prosper. The good company of Bath patronized him, and amongst the ladies especially he was beloved and admired. First his humble little shop became a smart one: then he discarded the selling of tooth-brushes and perfumery, as unworthy of a gentleman of an ancient lineage; then he shut up the shop altogether, and only had a little surgery attended by a genteel young man; then he had a gig with a man to drive him; and, before her exit

from this world, his poor old mother had the happiness of seeing from her bed-room window, to which her chair was rolled, her beloved John step into a close carriage of his own—a one-horse carriage it is true, but with the arms of the family of Pendennis handsomely emblazoned on the panels.

The writer once heard a member of a well-known family say that he remembered very well how, when he was a boy, the family doctor was invariably shown into the housekeeper's room, where he remained till a message was sent that the great lady was ready for him. The change is complete from the old gentleman who always wore a frock-coat and, according to Mr. George Russell, was distinguished by his zeal in saying "hum!" and "hah!" and by his introductory remark of, "And how are we to-day?" The young doctor now, full of learning though he be, is more likely to startle his patient by some quite unconventional comments. "Feeling a bit rotten are you? Well, it's not to be wondered at after what you've been through. All you have got to do is to try to stick it out, and, of course, I'll do what I can to help you," and so on. This man is a nicer type than sodden Bob Sawyer, and as for his knowledge he is seons in advance of Hum-and-hah.

The less conventional bearing of doctors to-day is, perhaps, symbolical of the fact—for we believe it is a fact—that there is less humbug in their profession than ever there was. The old apothecary was a "great medicine-man," said Lord Rosebery. We have a vision of a sort of witch-doctor. But it is the merit of the modern doctor that he uses no more humbug than is necessary and desirable to soothe an hysterical patient or humor a hypochondriacal one. The chief point is that he never humbugs himself. He does not claim any virtue or merit, although a profession which does so

much "good" might excusably fall into that habit. Imagine the case of a doctor dead tired at night after a long day. He hopes to be able to sit in his arm-chair, talk to his wife, and enjoy a smoke. A call comes for him to visit some poor person. He does not know whether the case is really urgent, but it may be. He must not run the risk of refusing to go. There is no question here of his losing a valuable patient through carelessness. From the point of view of profit it is an opportunity of doing business which every man in every other profession would reject on the spot. But the doctor, just because he is the forlorn hope of humanity, cannot leave out the human side; he does what is required of him without fuss or excessive repining, and certainly without calling upon the world to witness what a fine fellow he is. The enforced social isolation of doctors is plain enough to any one who has tried to get a busy general practitioner to dinner. Not a single hour of the day or night is his own, or can safely be said to be his own, in advance.

If the absence of self-complacency is one proof of the general lack of humbug among doctors, another and a more important proof is the steady refusal of the whole profession to exploit human nature. Perhaps people have not commonly pictured to themselves how extraordinarily easy it would be for doctors to do this. A little not very venal casuistry with themselves, and they might turn credulous and nervous patients into regular sources of income without its being demonstrable or even morally certain that they were obtaining money under false pretences. They might do much worse than that. If they combined together to make money at all costs—which is no more than the ordinary rapacity of some trades—they might hold humanity up to ransom. Suppose that they kept dark a scientific discovery, refusing to apply their se-

cret knowledge for the relief of suffering unless large sums were paid for the service. We understand that even in so liberal and highly civilized a country as France certain medical treatments may be patented. But an English doctor is bound to throw his most

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precious discoveries into the public pool. When we remember that this result is the fruit of "medical etiquette" we feel that we can well bear with that etiquette even in the rare instances when it seems to be, in its immediate application, a little intolerant and petty.

ABOUT SALONS.

There is no doubt that many women of the present day secretly long to hold a salon. They find something irresistibly attractive in the vision of well-lit rooms full of clever and attractive people; here a game of cards, there the sparkling of epigrams, a duel of wit between two brilliant beings surrounded by an appreciative circle of admirers, over there a talented artist receiving the congratulations of those who have seen his latest picture, and still more fervid praise from those who have not enjoyed the privilege.

By the fire stands a poet reciting some choice verses to an attentive group; and, in the distance, faint music speaks of a patronage that is not accorded to one or two of the muses alone; while in the secret chambers of her imagination the visionary sees a charming picture of herself—as hostess—gracefully reclining upon a brocade sofa and receiving the homage and compliments of her appreciative guests.

Let us try to realize the modern obstacles to such a scheme: amongst the chief being absence of leisure; for such an element there is no room in our lives now; and without leisure there can be no salon. I imagine that it must take time to compose a literary gem that is to be recited before the scathing and merciless criticism of an audience composed entirely of our intimate personal friends.

Again, how was the repartee managed? Did you retire to a distant chair and hatch an epigram, so to speak? Or did you bring it with you written down?

Either practice would be almost impossible to-day: in the first instance for the reason already given (the lack of time). How would it be possible for anyone, however clever, to hatch an epigram between the items of a crowded evening—dinner party, opera, dances—during which the salon itself can only be squeezed in somehow with the greatest difficulty. Unthinkable! As to the second instance: if the wit were a woman—pockets being now extinct, where would she conceal and carry the witticism—in the case of a written jest? Also, have we (men or women) any of us handwritings that we can read ourselves? Print is out of the question: a typewritten bon mot would look most suspicious.

Then we come to another problem: the fatal facility of movement given by motors at the present time. Years ago sedan chairs and chariots caused movement to be cumbersome; the fashion, both in clothes and vehicles, made it difficult to speed from one entertainment to another: the mere setting out from home was a little ceremony in itself; while the slightest doubt about the sobriety of your chair-men or the quality of the weather gave you pause—and your hostess breathing-

space. In any case what was known as society being comparatively small her mind was fairly at ease. Nowadays there is nothing to prevent five or six hundred people splashing up in motors on the rainiest night.

You naturally argue that the hostess should restrict her invitations; but this would be difficult, if not dangerous. She would run the risk of some disappointed and embittered intellect starting an opposition party, making a point of poaching upon her preserves and of snatching her brightest stars. Also, she could not risk withholding invitations for fear of anyone possessing some spark of intelligence which had hitherto eluded her detection, and which a few experiences of salon life might draw forth—just as that odd, dry plant the rose of Jericho suddenly expands when placed in a glass of fresh water.

Imagine your annoyance if Cousin Virginia, denied the entrée to your "Saturday evenings," delighted a rival assembly with an exquisite satire upon the British Constitution? Or suppose you to have purposely forgotten the address of that shadow over your childhood and adolescence—the family friend—and the whole of the next day is blighted (and just think how easily an English Sunday can be blighted) by hearing that he gratified that same ruthless competitor by rendering, unasked, a spirited glee with matchless grace—as a solo; accomplishing this unique effort (the perfect rendering of tenor, bass, and falsetto) to the universal stupefaction. Then there are the modern laws of copyright. Let us assume that after much trouble you have induced a playwright to oblige with a little playlet, and that you have (perhaps with less trouble) induced him to act the principal part therein. He would be terribly upset by finding that it had all been cabled immediately to America, and that after

this one performance, given gratis, all his hopes of emolument would have vanished. Shakespeare, of course, is a handy resource where catastrophes of this kind are to be avoided; but then Shakespeare would be a little old-fashioned in an up-to-date salon, and could not, I fear, act as a draw. Then would you, as hostess, be able to stand the strain of encouraging, soothing, and flattering all the rival talent? A labor arduous enough to turn any woman's hair gray (which of course did not matter in the days of powdered wigs).

I confess to being a heretic about salons. Surely time has handed us down softened and flattered pictures concerning this form of entertainment? You know the portraits of the Dutch school? The originals must have been singularly unpleasant-looking persons—for the most part: the male beings generally belonging to that type erroneously reputed to be beloved of women—namely, of the masterful kind; and the females usually of the cow-elephant variety. Yet we stand lost in admiration now that they have been softened and mellowed by the kindly hand of the centuries, and people (both those who know and otherwise) would make any sacrifice to possess one of these masterpieces.

I am sure that if I had lived in the days of salons, in the improbable event of my being bidden to one, I should have found the evening excessively tedious. It would have been impossible for me to avoid sharing the immense boredom of those who were, so to speak, in the character of audience, and who, having nothing to contribute to the programme, came from a sense of duty, or rather of fashion, and in order to talk about it next day. They, however, would be less depressing than others who, having nothing to say, were nevertheless unable to refrain from saying it. At an entertainment

of this description it is difficult to make a successful effort at exit: and so one would sit through several hours of mental affliction caused by the "original" blank verse, "original" musical composition, and "original" scintillating conversation of one's friends: the last greatly helped by quotations, since inverted commas are fortunately only visible in print.

Of course, Time has also obliterated the politely concealed yawns, the tactless if friendly welcome of old chestnuts, the coldness when jests fell flat, and the unseemly dash for supper as a longed-for termination to the proceedings—deplored only by the balked raconteur who, having laboriously led up to his best story, was prevented from telling it by the general exodus.

We still possess the lovely old furniture, the attractive snuff-boxes, the beautiful embroideries of that bygone age; and, if they could only speak, much illusion might be swept away: we should probably realize how many of these social efforts had failed, while others (notably those organized by ladies whose capabilities are best described by saying that they belonged rather to that order of salon to which the word "lit" is affixed in the French language) lost the high intellectual atmosphere with which they were originally surrounded; and, finally, how many more, mercifully forgotten, died of their own dulness?

Upon the whole our own bran-ple form of entertainment offers far more opportunity for joyous anticipation and amusement: the dinner parties where nobody is ever introduced to anyone, and where you may be sitting next to the long-sought ideal at last, or—what is, of course, far from fun—to the exact opposite; the dances where you

rush up to the ballroom—shaking hands with one unknown, and taking equally rapid flight downstairs after having circled wildly round a crowded floor to the strains of a band playing at express speed; having sampled the garden—if there is one (there need not be the same hurry about this)—and so on to some other gaiety elsewhere.

Foreigners complain about our want of manners: we should instantly retort by commenting upon their lack of imagination. What can be so exciting and so full of possibilities as the unknown, whether in hostess or anything else? If, as some cynics pretend, the reality is never worth the dream—please leave us the dream; the possible beginning of friendship or something more (this of course is addressed to spinsters only), the sudden meeting with the spirits of mirth and of merriment, and, better still, the unexpected arrival of a kindred spirit: all these amid the struggle and squash of revels, where, according to our unique British custom, the most extreme stiffness and the most casual informality walk hand in hand.

You see there is so little left to the imagination now—when aeroplanes are as common as birds, and when the North Pole will become so shortly the most fashionable of winter resorts, if not too overcrowded. If there is nothing hidden upon the face of the earth, how nice still not to know who it is who sits next you when you dine out; and we should be thankful that our cinematographic life in London still affords the quality of mystery and unexpectedness so lacking in the days of salons, when everyone knew the other only too well, and had only too much time in which to improve upon that melancholy knowledge.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS.

Since the publication of Archbishop Trench's volume "On the Study of Words," now many years ago, there has been no more illuminating book published in moderate compass upon the significance of word-changes than that contributed by Mr. Logan Pearsall Smith to the Home University Library upon "The English Language" (Henry Holt & Co.) The author touches briefly upon the origins of the language, and then proceeds to consider the foreign elements which enter into it, the character of modern English, the process of word-making and the contributions of some of the most prominent word-makers, and the history which is wrought into words and expressed in them. This last is one of the most interesting divisions of the book, for it would almost be possible to trace the chief events in English history and the shifting conditions of the English people in the new words introduced and the changing meanings of old words. Altogether, this little book is one that may be read and re-read with keen pleasure.

Carola Woerishoffer, the story of whose life and work is briefly told in a small volume published by the class of 1907, Bryn Mawr College, represented most strikingly what Miss Tarbell, in her Introduction, aptly characterizes as "the Revolt of the Young Rich,"—the passionate and at the same time practical sympathy felt by not a few very rich young men and women for the poor and the oppressed. Graduating from Bryn Mawr in 1907 and possessed of a large fortune, she threw herself with all the ardor of a strong young nature into social and charitable work in New York City. She joined the social settlement at Greenwich House; she offered herself as a worker

in the laundries of the city in order to accumulate facts for the Consumers' League, and spent four months in this hard and trying labor to get information at first hand; she gave bonds from her own fortune for the girls arrested in the shirt-waist strike; and she accepted the position of an investigator under the Bureau of Industries and Immigration,—in which work she lost her life, through an accident, last September. And in all this work she never sought notoriety. Hers was not one of the names frequently recurring in the newspapers. Hers was a noble, fearless and self-sacrificing life: the pity of it is that it should have been cut off at the age of twenty-six. The little book which tells the story of it may be had from the Greenwich House, 26 Jones St., New York City.

The Macmillan Company are the American publishers of "The Life of William Robertson Smith" by John Sutherland Black and George Chrystal, and of a companion volume of "Lectures and Essays of William Robertson Smith." The two volumes,—the *Life* especially, but the other volume also as supplementing the *Life* by characteristic selections from Professor Smith's writings,—recall theological controversies of thirty or forty years ago which seem now much farther removed into the past by reason of changes in currents of thought which have taken place in the interval. They also serve to throw light upon a character of singular strength and beauty, and upon the workings of a mind of rare scope and versatility. It was in 1875 that Professor Smith, who then held the chair of Hebrew in the Free Church College at Aberdeen, startled conservative theologians by his article on the Bible in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. The

views which he expressed in this article were the occasion of his trial for heresy before the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland at Glasgow in May, 1878, ending, two years later, in the formal admonition by the Assembly, that he refrain from like errors in time to come. Then followed, almost immediately, the second trial of Professor Smith, grounded on his article on "Hebrew Language and Literature" which ended in his dismissal from his professorship in the College of Aberdeen. This was in May, 1881. Professor Smith's biographers, naturally, give a great deal of space to the proceedings at these two trials, with details of the specifications contained in the several libels on which the proceedings were based and a graphic summary of the debates and an account of the resulting divisions in the church. As the cases were epoch-making in the history of modern Biblical criticism, this is not to be regretted; but readers who care less for theological niceties than for the disclosure of a strong and lovable personality will find much to interest them in the intimate glimpses which the narrative gives of Professor Smith's character, both as a man and as a scholar. The lectures and essays in the accompanying volume show the breadth and thoroughness of Professor Smith's scholarship. They include acute discussions of scientific themes, Biblical and critical essays, Arabian studies and elaborate reviews of Wellhausen and Renan. There are a number of portraits in the *Life* and one in the other volume.

A new series of biographies called "*The World's Leaders*," and edited by W. P. Trent, is published by Henry Holt and Company. The purpose of the series is to give in a condensed and somewhat popular form the lives of the world's most famous men in every line

of human achievement. One of the completed volumes is "*The World's Leading Poets*" by H. W. Boynton. The author has chosen Homer, Virgil, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton and Goethe as the greatest. An outline of each poet's life is given, and a critical estimate of his more important works. In the case of disputed questions both sides are carefully, although briefly, weighed and considered. The prevailing note of the work is one of strong common sense. There is no ardent championing of one theory or denunciation of another. The author's own opinions are given firmly, but unobtrusively. He offers the fruit of much careful research without a trace of the pedant. The book is one by which the student can profit because of its clearness, and one to which the average man can turn for the kind of information he wishes. Another volume, "*The World's Leading Painters*" is by G. B. Rose. It is interesting not only as biography, but from a purely literary standpoint. The author's personality and his devotion to the Art of Renaissance cloth the statement of facts and the lucid criticism with a distinct charm. The painters chosen are Da Vinci, Raphael, Titian, Rubens, Velasquez and Rembrandt. The life of each one is retold with a vividness which brings them as close as men one might meet to-day. In the Preface, the author makes an interesting statement. His views of famous paintings, he says, "will perhaps be found wanting in originality. This is not for want of patient study, but because great masterpieces are apt to make the same impression on normal minds." For this very reason his discussion of great pictures is comprehensible and delightful to the normal reader. After so propitious a beginning the development of this Series will be awaited with agreeable anticipation.